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The International Working-Class Movement

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OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

In seven volumes

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B.N. PONOMAREV

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The International Working-Class Movement

PROBLEMS
OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

Volume 2

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT
IN THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION
TO IMPERIALISM
(1871-1904)



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В СЕМИ ТОМАХ

Том второй

РАБОЧЕЕ ДВИЖЕНИЕ

В ПЕРИОД ПЕРЕХОДА К ИМПЕРИАЛИЗМУ
(1871-1904)

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PROBLEMS OF HISTORY
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VOLUME 2

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This volume, covering the period from the Paris Commune to the first Russian revolution, presents a thorough study of the major processes characterising the evolution of the proletariat into the vanguard of social development and gives a comparative analysis of the working-class movement in various regions. It traces the growth of the influence of Marxism, the foundation and development of socialist parties, trade unions and other workers' organisations. Special attention is paid to the struggle of the Russian proletariat, the creative development of Marxism by Lenin, and the formation of the Bolshevik Party, which ushered in a new stage in the world revolutionary process.

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INTRODUCTION

Every phase of the development of the working class and its revolutionary movement is meaningful and important from the standpoint of human history. This is natural: the working class and its social creative genius are not only an element of that history but its motor, its key element which, since the establishment of the capitalist mode of production, has evolved into a factor determining the main direction of social progress. How did that happen? What trials had the proletariat to go through in order to become the predominant force of world history? What are the lessons to be drawn today from its experience? The answers to these questions are of more than academic interest: suffice it to mention the furious polemics that still rage over various issues of the history of the working-class movement.

The first volume of this work traces the emergence and formation of the proletariat as a "class for itself", the first steps of the working-class movement.¹ The second volume is about the events that led to the maturing of the working class and its movement, giving the story of the processes that brought about the proletariat's conversion into society's leading class and made it capable of starting mankind's actual liberation from all the fetters of class oppression.

In their analyses of these developments and processes the authors based themselves on scientific, Marxist-Leninist methodology. Needless to say, this applies chiefly to the chronological division of the period covered by this volume.

Lenin stressed that in studying various phenomena of the historical past (or present) one should always be careful to define the character of the given epoch accurately. In other words, our first concern should be to ascertain the substance and direction of society's devel-

¹ *The International Working-Class Movement. Problems of History and Theory*, Vol. 1, *The Origins of the Proletariat and Its Evolution as a Revolutionary Class*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980

opment and establish what class is (or was) the dominant force behind this development, what forces are opposed to it, and what forces are aligned with it, are its allies. "Only on that basis," he wrote, "i. e., by taking into account, in the first place, the fundamental distinctive features of the various 'epochs' (and not single episodes in the history of individual countries), can we correctly evolve our tactics; only a knowledge of the basic features of a given epoch can serve as the foundation for an understanding of the specific features of one country or another."¹

The epoch covered by this volume was, to use Lenin's definition, the epoch of transition from pre-monopoly capitalism to imperialism, the epoch that witnessed the conversion of the bourgeoisie of developed countries from a progressive into a reactionary class. Moreover, it was the epoch when the new class, the proletariat, was preparing and slowly mustering its forces.²

The bourgeoisie was having its period of triumph. The capitalist mode of production was firmly established in Europe and the USA. The "financiers" and "geniuses" of profit-making were the principal "heroes" of the society of that day. In its drive for profits capitalism pounced upon foreign countries—the colonisation of backward regions proceeded at an ever faster pace. The bloodthirsty pacifiers of the peoples being enslaved were crowned with laurels. Those who fought for freedom, those who sought to defend their countries against the ruthless intruders were proclaimed criminals.

The industries and banks of the colonial powers combined with the manpower and natural resources of the colonies brought large omnivorous and insatiable corporations into being. They grew swiftly, united in blocs, clashed with each other, and then united again, this time against more powerful rivals. The unceasing collisions between capitals erupted into conflicts between nations.

But within this feverish "flowering" processes were taking place and inexorably gathering momentum that inevitably hastened the end of capital's unchallenged rule. Contradictions piled up and were steadily aggravated. Among them the first place was held by the increasingly more acute and explosive antagonism between labour and capital, between the proletarian masses, whose labour sustained society, and a handful of capitalists, who shamelessly appropriated the unpaid work of these masses.

The capitalist class grew, matured, and waxed fat on profits. But the working class, destined to upgrade society by freeing it from parasitical bourgeois domination, grew and matured in parallel, becoming more class conscious, organised, and militant.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Under a False Flag", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 145.

² *ibid.*, p. 146.

The working class grew mainly within national boundaries, gradually developing into a significant social force not only in the European nations and the USA but also in some countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The principal milestones of this process were the appearance of nation states and the extension of democratic rights. At the same time, the working class was evolving also into an international force. These two processes ran together, fusing and enriching each other. From an *objective* international quantity the working class was becoming an international quantity in fact, in *practical terms*.

The growth of the proletariat—on the national and a global scale—was a multi-faceted and complex process. The struggles were economic, political, and ideological. These were carried on in different combinations in the various countries, but everywhere they intertwined to one extent or another. Where the link between them grew closer, the working-class movement gained strength and its actions became more effective.

The subterranean forces of the future kept surfacing, upsetting bourgeois society's sham harmony. The social geysers—mass popular, chiefly working-class, movements—marked off the milestones of the approaching crucial turn in the history of the human race—the triumphant socialist revolution.

In *The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx*, a work written in 1913, Lenin discussed mankind's development following the publication of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. He noted: "Since then world history has clearly been divided into three main periods: (1) from the revolution of 1848 to the Paris Commune (1871); (2) from the Paris Commune to the Russian revolution (1905); (3) since the Russian revolution."¹ This volume is about the second period named by Lenin.

The Paris Commune of 1871—the first experience of rule by the working class and its allies, of the dictatorship of the proletariat—was one of the most important landmarks in the history of the revolutionary working-class movement. To quote Marx, "With the struggle in Paris the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase."²

A new epoch of mankind's development was indeed drawing nearer. But it could not dawn of itself: to bring that about the working class had to develop the appropriate policies, learn the ways and means of struggle, and unite to form an integral organised force.

Marx and Engels did all they could to facilitate the attainment

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 582.

² Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann, April 17, 1871, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 248.

of precisely that aim. By generalising the new phenomena characterising the incipient ebb of capitalism they provided the working-class movement with conclusions of historic significance. It was towards the last years of their lives that Marx and Engels brilliantly forecast the trends of social development at the then new stage of capitalism's evolution. These trends were later examined comprehensively by Lenin. The founders of Marxism made an enormous contribution to the dissemination of the ideas of scientific communism and to the struggle against recurrences of petty-bourgeois socialism and opportunism. It would be impossible to overrate their contribution to the creation and ideological strengthening of proletarian parties (this process acquired a wide dimension precisely during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century).

Karl Marx died in 1883. For the next 12 years Engels single-handedly continued the work begun with his great friend. Present-day Marxologists go to all lengths to belittle Engels' role and work during the last decade of his life. Some allege that he was a passive observer of the unfolding class battles; others describe him as confirmed reformist. The relevant chapters present extensive material showing that this falsification began in Engels' lifetime (a falsification to which the right-wing Social-Democrats of those days, concealing Engels' fundamental conclusions from the people, subscribed substantially).

The true Engels of those last years of his life was a dedicated fighter against capitalist rule, a devoted revolutionary, a theoretician of colossal stature with a keen sense of the new and, at the same time, one of the founders of the Second International, and friend and counsellor of all revolutionary parties and organisations of the working people. His energy and will were inexhaustible, and his knowledge, erudition, and scientific acumen were infinite.

Frederick Engels died in 1895, precisely at a time when the new requirements and potentialities of the working-class movement were becoming especially tangible.

The need arose for charting and giving effect to a correct orientation for the working class on the basis of the solid groundwork laid by the founders of scientific socialism. What was needed was not merely a mechanical continuation of what the Marxists had been doing in the preceding years. The stage of the working-class movement's "peaceful" development was coming to a close. The objective and subjective conditions for a revolutionary explosion of the exploiting system were accumulating. A *qualitative advance* was inevitable in the elaboration of theory and policy, and in revolutionary action itself.

But how was that advance to be accomplished? The debates grew stormy.

The right opportunists, revisionists declared that new solutions were needed. But as sometimes happens in such cases, their "recipes" contained recommendations that were tantamount to a death blow to the revolutionary movement. Marx and Engels, the opportunists said, were unquestionably brilliant theoreticians and their services were undeniable. But they lived in a different epoch. The situation had changed, and so had the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Consequently, the "old" Marxism was now useless, it had become obsolete.... Right opportunism thereby endeavoured to obliterate the legacy of Marx and Engels. The revisionists urged "advancing without looking back"; they did not stop at the most blatant falsifications, and sought to interpret Marx and Engels "in a new way". In fact, they tried to negate Marxism, to strip it of its revolutionary essence.

Revisionism, right opportunism was not the result solely of the misconceptions of individuals. Its dissemination was facilitated by some objective processes of the class struggle under monopoly capitalist rule. This volume shows the mainsprings of this current, how capitalism's development along the road to its last, imperialist stage, the internal processes in the working class bringing about its stratification, and the growth of bourgeois pressures on the proletariat led to the institutionalisation of right opportunism.

But right opportunism is not alone. "Left" opportunism grows as a sort of reaction to it, as a manifestation of petty-bourgeois pressures on the working-class movement. Outwardly the antipode of right opportunism, it is actually no more than the reverse side of one and the same coin.

Both the "left" and right opportunists attacked the theory of Marxism at the close of the nineteenth century in an effort to emasculate it.

They urged unprepared actions, ignoring realities, setting great store by "direct" actions, and turning a blind eye to the fact that this could mean isolation from the masses. The "leftists" grasped at one or another quotation from the works of the proletariat's great teachers, making a dogma of it and then attempting to tailor actual developments to it. In those years "left" opportunism was exemplified by unrelenting sectarianism and constant revivals of anarchist dogmas (in the new conditions these developed mostly into anarcho-sindicalism). This signified in fact as total a rupture with Marxism as had been made by right opportunism. Dogmatism of all stripes, even when it hides behind the most eye-catching, ultra-revolutionary slogans, is as completely alien to Marxism as sectarianism, whatever its garb.

In other words, a motley but unmistakably opportunist trend took shape in the international working-class movement, in the Second International, at the close of the nineteenth century. Subsequently,

after the Great October Revolution, the right-wing Social-Democratic leaders charged the Communists with having engineered a split, contending that their activities had fragmented the working-class movement. The facts stated in this volume convincingly give the lie to these contentions. The split in the working-class movement was due to the activities of Eduard Bernstein, Alexandre Millerand, and British trade union leaders. It was they who directed a large section of the working class to a road leading away from the revolution, a road leading to grave setbacks and, in terms of history, a loss of momentum in the struggle against class oppression. The only reason that this was not entirely successful was that the revolutionary elements in the working-class movement took a firm stand against it.

New theoretical propositions and a new line of working-class action consonant with the new conditions and circumstances could only be worked out by creatively developing Marxism. Above all, it had to be properly understood. As any other science, Marxism requires continuity. Every new step in its development can only be made as the continuation of previous advances, of previous knowledge. Everything evolved by Marxism ever since its appearance is part of the foundation on which the edifice of the present-day revolutionary working-class movement stands.

Scientific breadth, theoretical depth, the courage of innovation, unshakable fidelity to principles, outstanding political intelligence, and wise tactical flexibility were needed to understand the laws of the new epoch through the prism of the theoretical and political work of Marx and Engels, draw correct political conclusions for the future, and head the struggle to translate these conclusions into reality.

The period we are dealing with brought into prominence many personalities of the working-class movement who made their mark in the chronicles of human thought. The epoch itself generated the need for such personalities—not individuals prone to anarchy and battling the mainstream of life, but fighters who creatively studied the laws of history and could place themselves entirely in the service of social progress. Of the persons drawn into the centre of political life in that period the most outstanding was Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, who made a titanic contribution to the development of the international working-class movement.

Much, very much has been written about Lenin. More will be written. And the farther we move forward the more will we appreciate what was achieved by him and acknowledge his genius and its sources.

These sources were extraordinarily prolific and diversified.

But first a few words about Russia, the great country, which, to quote Lenin, came to Marxism through the suffering it had borne

throughout its past. It is not fortuitous, therefore, that much of this volume is devoted to Russia, to its working-class movement.

Russia inevitably became the hub of the world revolutionary movement. Since the beginning of the twentieth century the struggle of the working class of Russia has been the *main* class experience of the world proletariat. Have not those who have spent so much energy to smear that experience, to reduce it to a local, particular phenomenon thereby reaffirmed its historical significance and, in addition, shown their helplessness to void it?

Indeed, the malevolence of the attacks of the anti-Communists on Russia's revolutionary experience is motivated not by the uniqueness of that experience but, on the contrary, chiefly by its universally significant, historical content. The enemies of genuine socialism cannot forgive the proletariat of Russia, the Bolsheviks, and Lenin for having *in practice* confirmed the key theoretical proposition formulated by Marx and Engels, namely, that the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist rule and society's socialist transformation are inevitable.

Essentially the same rationale motivates the hostility of the opportunists for the experience of the October Revolution. In truth, that experience runs against their grain for, among other things, it has convincingly proved that the jettisoning of the principles of scientific communism is incompatible with the actual interests of the working-class movement, with the interests of the revolution.

Leninism was born precisely in Russia, for which Marx and Engels had predicted a great revolutionary future. And this was no mere accident.

Does this signify, as its opponents assert, that Leninism is a "purely Russian" or even "exclusively Russian" phenomenon? By no means. Leninism was born in Russia, but it absorbed the entire experience of the world, chiefly West European, working-class movement. Everything that the working class of Western Europe understood, accomplished or prepared was for Lenin a gigantic store of knowledge, the condition without which it would have been impossible to draw generalisations fundamentally vital for the policy of the working class in the new epoch. In other words, Leninism is an enlargement of Marxism, of the great teaching that assimilated all the true wisdom of the past, the experience of the various liberation movements and of the class struggle of the proletariat, was able to impart consciousness to the movement of many millions of people, and for that reason became invincible. Moreover, it is the product of the new epoch with its countless twists and turns, an epoch that broke the weak and tempered the strong.

The close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was a turning point not only on account of the character of

social development but also because it was the period that saw the emergence of Leninism and was the starting point of the Leninist stage of the history of the international working-class movement.

The facts presented in this volume clearly demonstrate the continuity between the period when Marx and Engels lived and worked and the period when Lenin began his work: Marxism is the bedrock, the foundation on which Leninism arose, while Leninism is the logical continuation and development of Marxism. This is what totally upsets the inventions of the falsifiers, who try to find contradictions in the work of Marx and Lenin and play off one against the other.

Of course, Marx and Lenin lived in different epochs and the accents in their work are in some cases different. Marx, who never ceased to be a practicing revolutionary, gave most of his attention, by virtue of historical need, to showing and explaining the objective laws governing the capitalist mode of production and proving that it would inevitably be replaced by the higher, socialist social system. Lenin, who continued working on this task under the conditions of imperialism, concentrated, likewise by virtue of the historical situation, mainly on another aspect of the problem. The greatness of his work lies not only in that he laid the theoretical groundwork for but led the socialist revolution, that turn in world history that Marx had said was inevitable. That is why alongside his profound theoretical studies of the objective aspects of reality, Lenin gave so much attention to the subjective side of the historical process—namely, to the masses, to the working class and its party.

But for all the difference—and the difference was, of course, of no little importance—there is no contradiction between the works of Marx and Lenin. On the contrary, they form an integral whole.

Without running ahead of the subject matter of this volume, we should like to briefly note the landmarks of Lenin's great theoretical contribution to the development of the working-class movement.

The first spectrum of problems studied by Lenin concerns the *expansion of the proletarian movement's revolutionary potentialities and the growth of its role in society's development in the new epoch.*

Lenin linked the expansion of the working-class movement's potentialities chiefly to the growth of the working class and of the leverage exercised by it in society. "The more proletarians there are", he wrote, "the greater is their strength as a revolutionary class and the nearer and more possible does socialism become."¹ Imperialism's development, he noted, is inescapably building up the proletarian

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 20.

ranks, whose numerical strength grows "as a result of the very process of economic development".¹

In this context mention must be made of the enormous significance of Lenin's methodology for studying the numerical growth of the proletariat. He pointed out that this growth was due not only to the increment in the number of industrial workers, that capitalism's development objectively opened up new spheres for the activity of the working class and, lastly, that those segments of the army of wage labour which in the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century were not bracketed with the proletariat, would be inevitably proletarianised. He meant that section of engineers, technicians, and scientists which was directly involved in the production of surplus value and which, as he said, would unavoidably draw ever closer to the working class.

As a result of the objective trends towards the numerical growth of the proletariat, trends pinpointed by Lenin, in the industrialised capitalist countries the working class today comprises the majority of the gainfully employed population. Understandably, this clears the way for an intensification of the class struggle and gives the global army of the proletariat added potentialities.

Needless to say, this enhancement of the proletariat's potentialities is linked not only to its numerical growth. Lenin showed that the cardinal factor here is the changed social situation in the capitalist countries, the new alignment of class forces resulting from capitalism's development into its highest and last—imperialist—stage.

In the period of pre-monopoly capitalism, when the bourgeoisie had not yet spent its revolutionary spirit and the proletariat was relatively small, poorly organised, and had no militant parties, the latter, while being society's most revolutionary element and objectively expressing the basic interests of the working masses, was not in a position to lead their struggle. The situation began to change at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. By that time the revolutionary drive of the bourgeoisie in the principal capitalist countries had nearly exhausted itself and contradictions were arising between the monopoly and the big bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the entire people, on the other. The proletariat, on the contrary, which had grown dramatically and set up political parties and trade unions, had acquired a greater subjective ability to lead the masses. In these new conditions, as this volume shows, it not only objectively expressed the interests of the working masses but in a number of countries began to turn increasingly into the centre mustering all elements of society opposed to big capital.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Draft of a New Law on Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 220.

In the light of these facts, Lenin drew a conclusion of inestimable political significance: "The leading role of the proletariat has been fully revealed. It has also been revealed that the strength of the proletariat in the process of history is immeasurably greater than its share of the total population."¹

Subsequently, when he generalised the experience of other countries and the experience of the revolutionary year of 1917, he amplified this idea, formulating an important law of the development of the proletarian movement in the new epoch: "The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism."²

This was a crucial conclusion for revolutionary theory and practice. The right opportunists, revisionists maintained that capitalism could only be abolished when the bulk of the population consisted of proletarians. This metaphysical approach had closed the road to socialism for most of the world's population for a long time. But Lenin's conclusion, which was drawn on the basis of a substantive study of historical experience, opened up a broad revolutionary prospect for all mankind. This conclusion was then borne out by the history of Russia and by the further development of the revolutionary movement. Although in some countries it did not comprise the majority of the population, the working class played the paramount role in accomplishing socialist revolutions in all the countries that have broken with the system of capitalist wage slavery once and for all.

With the conclusion that the actual role played by the proletariat is much greater than the proportion it represents of the population is directly linked Lenin's formulation of the question of the proletariat's hegemony in the revolution. This was a new word in Marxism. The fundamentals of the doctrine of this hegemony had been enunciated by Marx and Engels. They had proved that the working class was the natural leader of all the working and exploited masses in the struggle for socialism. With the thesis on the leadership of the proletariat was also linked Marx's brilliant conclusion that the dictatorship of the proletariat was the essence of proletarian power in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. However, Marx

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, p. 31.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 274.

and Engels meant the leadership of the proletariat in the socialist revolution, for which the prospects were very remote in their day.

Taking into account the character and specifics of the new epoch, and also the corresponding alignment of class forces, Lenin came to the conclusion as early as the end of the nineteenth century that the proletariat could and should now be the leader not only in the socialist but also in any people's, including bourgeois-democratic, revolution. The experience of the 1905 revolution enabled him to continue amplifying this conclusion. It had reaffirmed that the proletariat's leadership of any people's revolution was, in the new conditions, not only an objective possibility but also an objective requirement of society's development. Practice had brought to light the fact that on account of its increasingly more pronounced reactionary character the imperialist bourgeoisie was no longer capable of heading the democratic revolution; it could only betray or throttle it. "Only the working-class movement rouses that truly revolutionary and advanced class which has nothing to lose from the collapse of the existing political and social order, the class which is the final and inevitable product of that order, the class which alone is the unquestionable and uncompromising enemy of that order."¹

Democratic rights and freedoms substantially facilitate the working people's struggle for complete liberation from capitalist oppression. The working class, naturally, is the most consistent champion of democracy, defending, when necessary, even bourgeois democracy against assaults by the reactionary bourgeoisie, against fascism. It is thus the effective leader of any democratic movement, uniting under the banner of that movement everybody capable of actually fighting for its aims. Proletarian leadership of the democratic revolution has thus become an indispensable condition of the success of that revolution.

Further, Lenin showed the content of proletarian leadership, pointing out that it represented the alliance of the working class with the non-proletarian sections of working people, chiefly with the peasants. Lastly, he saw that proletarian leadership of the democratic revolution was the foundation and guarantee of the possibility for its development into a socialist revolution.

In this context he analysed the problems placed on the agenda by the further development of monopoly capitalism, especially by its growing into state-monopoly capitalism, which, essentially speaking, consummates the preparation of the objective conditions for the socialist revolution. A gigantic accounting and control apparatus covering the whole of society emerges within the state-monopoly structure, and the foundation is laid for the planned regulation of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the Tasks of the Social-Democratic Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 270.

the economy the essence of which runs counter to the private property substance of capitalism as such. This leads to a further aggravation of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production and, consequently, of all the other contradictions of capitalism. As a result, the subjective factor of social progress, chiefly the struggle of the working class, acquires increasing leverage.

Lenin wrote that "socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly which is made to serve the interests of the whole people and has to that extent ceased to be capitalist monopoly".¹ By virtue of this the rapid development of state-monopoly relations gives the working class the possibility of putting forward new slogans of struggle aimed at limiting and pruning the power of the monopolies before the socialist revolution by establishing and extending democratic control over various sectors of the economy. In *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It* Lenin charted a brilliant plan of struggle by the proletariat under state-monopoly capitalism and formulated some concrete slogans for that struggle (nationalisation of the banks and the biggest industrial enterprises, workers' control in production, and so forth), whose implementation could enhance the role and influence of the proletariat and thereby substantially clear the way for a socialist revolution.

In emphasising the significance of transitional forms and stages in the struggle for the socialist revolution, Lenin always urged keeping the end goal—the revolution itself—in sight. On the other hand, he stressed that the new means and orientations of struggle at the disposal of the proletariat under state-monopoly capitalism ultimately hastened and eased the way to the socialist revolution for the working masses.

Lastly, he pointed out that with the development of state-monopoly capitalism the working class receives greater possibilities for forming an alliance with other sections of working people and for heading the struggle for democracy and socialism. "Under private ownership of the means of production," Lenin said, "all these steps towards greater monopolisation and control of production by the state are inevitably accompanied by intensified exploitation of the working people, by an increase in oppression."² Naturally, this intensification of oppression met with growing resistance, also from those segments of society, including a large section of the petty bourgeoisie and part of the middle bourgeoisie, that had been virtually in one and the same camp with monopoly capital at the initial

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 362.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 309.

stages of imperialism's development. All this meant that a new, wider social contradiction—between the monopolies and the entire people—had emerged and developed alongside the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Lenin's analysis of the development of the "monopoly-people" contradiction was of immense significance in showing the essence of the new situation in the capitalist world and adopting an effective tactic by the revolutionary parties relative to the non-proletarian sections of the working people. The main practical conclusion from this analysis was that possibilities were arising for the proletariat to unite the entire opposition to monopoly capital and direct it into a single channel, that of struggle for fundamental democratic reforms in bourgeois society.

The brilliance of Lenin's propositions about the growth of the potentialities of the working class in the revolutionary struggle and about the hegemony of the proletariat under conditions of imperialism is seen today more clearly than ever. The experience of the people's democratic and socialist revolutions in countries comprising one-third of mankind has eloquently borne out Lenin's ideas under the most diverse historical conditions.

Objective laws thus predicate the steady growth of the proletariat's revolutionary potentialities. Having drawn this conclusion, Lenin emphasised that even in the new, more favourable situation the historic mission of the proletariat would not be fulfilled automatically, spontaneously.

The conditions under which the proletariat can discharge its historic mission are another major problem of the working-class movement that was exhaustively studied by Lenin. On a purely theoretical plane and with the use of hard facts from the experience of the working-class movement he showed that in the absence of some indispensable conditions the working class could not carry out the tasks confronting it.

What are these conditions?

Lenin regarded *the promotion of the proletarian class consciousness among the masses and the conversion of the working people's spontaneous actions against entrepreneur oppression into a conscious struggle against the capitalist system* as a prime condition enabling the working class to carry out its historic mission. He said that "the more profound the change we wish to bring about, the more must we rouse an interest and an intelligent attitude towards it, and convince more millions and tens of millions of people that it is necessary".¹ The key task, as he saw it, was to win the majority of the proletariat to

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p. 498

the side of the revolution, to draw the workers into an active revolutionary struggle.

In his analysis of the formation of proletarian class consciousness and the tasks confronting the Social-Democrats in this connection he noted that the working class "is instinctively, spontaneously Social-Democratic",¹ that without this spontaneous class instinct "the cause of the revolution would be hopeless. As you know, nobody would free the workers if they did not free themselves".² "But," he raised the question, "is instinct alone sufficient? You would not get far if you rely on instinct alone. This instinct must be transformed into political awareness."³

Continuing the analysis started by Marx and Engels, Lenin showed that the transformation of instinct into awareness, that the formation of proletarian class consciousness is essentially an *unbroken process*. In no period of historical development can this process be considered complete because the composition of the working class renews itself constantly, the conditions of the life and work of the workers and the tactics of the class adversary change. From this, Lenin said, it follows that the task of forming the proletariat's class, revolutionary consciousness is unending and that there must be no slackening of attention to this task.

It is of the utmost importance, therefore, as Lenin pointed out, to see the objective relationship between the advances made by the working class in its struggle for better living and working conditions and the growth of its class consciousness. The relevant theses put forward by Lenin are particularly topical today, because now, when the working class of the West has achieved some headway, chiefly in improving its material condition, bourgeois and revisionist, including "leftist" pundits, are actively touting the "theory" that the working class has "lost" its revolutionary spirit. They argue that since the proletariat, which had battled its way out of appalling poverty, has its prime needs satisfied, its revolutionary impulses have dampened and it has integrated with a renewed bourgeois society. This platform underlies a system of arguments designed to prove that the Marxist-Leninist theory of the socialist revolution has "collapsed". They attribute to Marxism the view that the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat stems exclusively from poverty. But since an end has been put to poverty the socialist revolution is no longer inevitable.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Reorganisation of the Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 32.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Seventh [April] All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 268.

³ Ibid.

To say nothing of the glaring lie that "poverty has been done away with" (even in the USA and Western Europe it is officially admitted that millions of people are living on or below the poverty line), it must be stated categorically that Marxism has never deduced the inevitability of the proletarian revolution from poverty. The proletariat acquires its revolutionary role chiefly from its *social* status in society, in other words, from the status of an exploited class denied the means of production and living by the sale of its labour. Of course, poverty and the fall of the standard of living during crises or wars add to the people's disgust with the system that breeds calamities. But this is only an additional charge of indignation. The *main fuel* from which the flames of social revolution burst lies in the essence of capitalism, in the incompatibility of the social interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

More than 80 years ago Lenin waged war with the Narodniks (Populists), who believed that poverty was the sole source of the revolutionary spirit of the masses. In reply to them, Lenin wrote: "There are two ways of arriving at the conclusion that the worker must be roused to fight ... *either* by regarding the worker as the sole fighter for the socialist system ... *or* by appealing to him simply as the one who suffers most from the present system, who has nothing more to lose.... But that would mean compelling the worker to drag in the wake of the bourgeois radicals, who refuse to see the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat."¹ His conclusion was that the "position of the factory worker in the general system of capitalist relations makes him the sole fighter for the emancipation of the working class".²

From this there logically arises another question, namely, that of the relationship between the living standard of the working people and their revolutionary drive, their capacity for struggle. Of course, a rise of the workers' living standard under capitalism can beguile some of them with illusions about capitalism and stimulate opportunist feeling. However, in parallel, as Lenin noted more than half a century ago, "as it strives to improve its living conditions, the working class also progresses morally, intellectually and politically, becomes more capable of achieving its great emancipatory aims".³ "The history of the working-class movement in all countries," he wrote, "shows that the better-situated strata of the working class respond

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1960, p. 294.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Economic and Political Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 85.

to the ideas of socialism more rapidly and more easily. From among these come, in the main, the advanced workers that every working-class movement brings to the fore, those who can win the confidence of the labouring masses, who devote themselves entirely to the education and organisation of the proletariat, who accept socialism consciously, and who even elaborate independent socialist theories."¹

Lastly, fundamental significance attaches to Lenin's study of the question of the relationship between spontaneity and conscious effort of the revolutionary vanguard in the process of moulding the class, revolutionary awareness of the proletariat.

He noted that although the entire course of social development, the very logic of the position of the proletariat unavoidably brings it round to understanding the necessity for an active struggle for its rights, the transition from a class instinct to class awareness cannot be spontaneous. "The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree."² As the class struggle broadens the bourgeoisie exerts an ever greater ideological pressure on the working-class movement.

The development of a proletarian class consciousness is thus an unceasing and unremitting struggle between bourgeois, imperialist and proletarian, socialist ideologies. Today, even more than in Lenin's lifetime, the success of this struggle depends on the work aimed at giving the working class, the working-class movement a thorough understanding of the proletarian scientific ideology. This, Lenin wrote, is the task of the revolutionary party propounding Marxism and proletarian internationalism. It is this type of party that is capable of bringing definite socialist ideals to the spontaneous working-class movement, connecting this movement with socialist convictions that should attain the level of contemporary science.³

The task set by Lenin of securing the utmost broadening and strengthening of the revolutionary working-class movement's political consciousness remains a pivotal task of the international class struggle.

The second major condition allowing the working class to fulfil its historic mission in the new conditions created in the closing decades of the nineteenth century is the *organisation of the proletarian vanguard in a revolutionary, Marxist party, in a new type of party*. "In its struggle for power," Lenin wrote, "the proletariat has no other

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 280.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 386.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Our Immediate Task", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 217.

weapon but organisation."¹ The Communist Party embodies the highest form of political organisation of the working class. Without such a party the proletariat cannot rise to a conscious class struggle; without it the struggle is doomed to failure. "Our principal and fundamental task," Lenin wrote, "is to facilitate the political development and the political organisation of the working class."²

An amplification of the views articulated by Marx and Engels, Lenin's coherent teaching on the proletarian, revolutionary party is an unfading contribution to the cause of the working class. In the closing chapters of this volume this question is considered in detail on the basis of relevant factual material. However, at this point we feel we should mention Lenin's basic ideas about the formation of revolutionary parties of the proletariat as a *condition* for the fulfilment of the proletariat's historic mission.

In 1904, drawing conclusions from the first lessons of the existence of a Marxist party in Russia and taking into account the long experience of the international social-democratic movement, Lenin wrote: "Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the 'lower depths' of utter destitution, savagery, and degeneration, the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class."³

After the October Revolution, in the light of that revolution's triumph and the betrayal of the cause of the working class by the right-wing leaders of European Social-Democratic parties, Lenin repeatedly dwelt on the proletariat's need for a revolutionary party. In order to make the proletariat capable of carrying out its great historic mission, the Communists organise it in an independent political party in opposition to all bourgeois parties, guide all manifestations of its class struggle, make the workers aware of the irreconcilable conflict between the interests of the exploiters and those of the exploited, and ascertain the historic significance of and conditions for the imminent social revolution.

Addressing the working class of the West, Lenin wrote that such a party was indispensable for mobilising the might of the entire working class and that it had to be a class, revolutionary organisation closely linked to the whole mass of the exploited people and intoler-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 415.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 369.

³ V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 415.

ant of opportunism of any kind. "Only the Communist Party, if it is really the vanguard of the revolutionary class, if it really comprises all the finest representatives of that class, if it consists of fully conscious and staunch Communists who have been educated and steel-ed by the experience of a persistent revolutionary struggle, and if it has succeeded in linking itself inseparably with the whole life of its class and, through it, with the whole mass of the exploited, and in completely winning the confidence of this class and this mass—only such a party is capable of leading the proletariat in a final, most ruthless and decisive struggle against all the forces of capital-ism. On the other hand, it is only under the leadership of such a party that the proletariat is capable of displaying the full might of its revolutionary onslaught, and of overcoming the inevitable apathy and occasional resistance of that small minority, the labour aristoc-racy, who have been corrupted by capitalism, the old trade union and co-operative leaders, etc."¹

These lessons were not lost. During the decades that have since passed the communist movement has become a global force and an effective element of the world-wide struggle for democracy and so-cialism.

"The historical experience of many countries," Leonid Brezhnev said at the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, "the experience of the class struggle has given convincing evidence of how necessary the activity of the Communist Parties is for mankind and how fruitful this activity is for social development. Guided by Marxist-Leninist theory, the Communist Parties show the peoples the road to the communist future. They rally the peoples to the struggle and steadfastly march in the van of the mass movements for the great goals of social progress. Communists are always in the front rank of the fighters for the vital rights of the working people, for peace. They carry high the invincible banner of the socialist re-volution."²

It is no mere chance that today the question of the role of the com-munist parties has become one of the most acute issues of the ideolog-ical struggle. The enemies of socialism go to all lengths to undermine the role of the communist parties and discredit them in the eyes of the people. Their attacks are directed mainly at the fraternal parties of the socialist countries. This stand of the class adversary is fur-ther evidence that the communist parties are effectively implementing Lenin's behests and enabling the working class to discharge its his-toric mission.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 187-88.

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 155.

Lenin underscored the unity between the objective and subjective factors behind the development of the working-class movement, identifying two aspects of this unity: the responsibility borne by the proletarian party for its policies and the need for exhaustively studying social development and the changes in the economic and political situation in order to refract them correctly in the activity of the working class and its organisations.

The third condition making it possible for the working class to fulfil its historic mission, a condition that is likewise essential in the present-day situation, is that *the working-class movement must be united*. Lenin's analysis of the situation in the epoch of imperialism brought to light the objective factors actuating the tendency towards splitting the working class and the working-class movement and, unquestionably, the stronger tendency towards unity of the proletarian ranks.

He showed that the tendency towards splitting the working class gets new stimuli under imperialism. This is due to the following circumstances. The increasing concentration of production and capital and the formation of monopolies make the disparity in the conditions of the sale of labour more glaring between individual regions and countries, thereby widening the internal differentiation of the proletariat and fostering competition in its ranks. Imperialism forms a world-wide market and a single economic organism. The working-class movement, too, becomes world-wide. Consequently, the struggle of tendencies in the working-class movement likewise becomes world-wide. This means that the social problems in the industrially developed capitalist nations are compounded by the problem of relations between the working class of developed and of economically backward nations; in the early stages of imperialism's development the latter were mainly colonies.

This problem is linked, first, to the colossal gulf between the living and working conditions of the proletarians in developed and in economically backward countries and, second, to the fact that to a certain extent the working class of imperialist states objectively participates in the exploitation of colonial peoples. This gives the monopolies new openings for splitting the working-class movement.

But, as Lenin showed, the new historical epoch also creates additional objective possibilities making the striving for working-class unity stronger and more effective. Imperialism, specifically state-monopoly capitalism, is taking society to a point where the material conditions for the socialist revolution reach their highest, within the framework of capitalism, level of maturity. Monopoly capitalism is the eve of the socialist revolution. The maturing of the objective conditions for a social upheaval sharply increases the gravitation towards unity of the working class and the possibility for conduct-

ing a conscious policy of uniting all the contingents of the working-class movement for the struggle against capitalism. The concentration of workers at large industrial centres and at large factories and a higher level of the workers' education and general culture are likewise a factor of no little importance in consolidating the proletarian ranks. Lastly, oppression by the monopolies, exploitation of labour by capital, which under imperialism becomes more ruthless than ever, inevitably evokes strong resistance from the working class and its allies. This raises the level of class awareness, bringing the working people round to realising that in order to counter imperialism they have to join forces.

Lenin characterised the way in which both tendencies manifest themselves in the following words: "On the one hand, there was the tendency to settle down fairly comfortably under capitalism, which was feasible only for a small upper stratum of the proletariat. On the other hand, there was the tendency to lead the whole mass of working and exploited people towards the revolutionary overthrow of capital in general."¹

In our day the first tendency is seen most distinctly in the activities of the right-wing Social-Democratic leaders, who seek to adapt the working-class movement to capitalism. The second tendency manifests itself in the founding and work of Marxist-Leninist parties, of parties of a new type capable of rousing the masses to accomplish a social revolution. The first such party, that of the Bolsheviks, was founded and nurtured by Lenin.

In considering the historical prospects of the struggle between the two tendencies in the working-class movement, Lenin showed that in the new situation, particularly in the twentieth century, when the conditions for a world-wide socialist revolution were maturing, this struggle would ultimately *tilt in favour of the second, revolutionary tendency*, the tendency towards unity of the proletarian forces. However, although society's objective development is leading towards the inevitable triumph of the revolutionary tendency, towards unity of the working-class movement, this victory will not come automatically. It can only come as a result of an unremitting struggle by the conscious revolutionary forces of the working class.

Subsequent developments have convincingly borne out Lenin's conclusions about the struggle of two tendencies in the working-class movement. To this day these conclusions are a powerful weapon of the revolutionary proletarian vanguard in its struggle for the current, immediate aims and for the long-term goals of the working class.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 216.

Part One

THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT
AND THE INTERNATIONALISATION
OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Chapter 1

BASIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGES

ACCELERATED GROWTH OF THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND THEIR INCREASINGLY PRONOUNCED UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

The last three decades of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century witnessed capitalism's development in breadth and depth. This was stimulated by many factors, for instance, the end to the fragmentation of Italy and Germany with the rise of big nation states; the abolition of serfdom in Russia and of slavery in the USA; and the Meiji revolution in Japan. The productive forces began to expand dramatically with the result that the world's industrial output more than trebled in the 1870s-1890s. Moreover, rapid changes occurred in the pattern of industrial production. Whereas in the preceding era consumer goods, particularly textiles, were the predominant industries, this role began to pass to the metallurgical, engineering, and other heavy industries from the 1870s onwards. New industries mushroomed and preparations were under way for a fundamental restructuring of technologies.

The steadily rising rate of industrial development was closely linked to scientific and technological progress. Technical innovations and breakthroughs were leading to a revolution in capitalist production—the reshaping of industry's energy base and the consummation of the transition to large-scale machine industry.

For more than two centuries industry had been using the energy of water and steam. This had limited the size of factories and, in many cases, dictated their siting near energy sources. The invention of dynamos (1867) and of power transmission over long distances allowed enlarging production and boosting its efficiency, made energy available to the most remote regions, and created the possibility for the practically unlimited transformation of one form of energy into another. The tremendous revolutionising significance of these great innovations was at once seen by Frederick Engels, who wrote in 1883: "...This is a colossal revolution. The steam-powered machine taught us to turn heat into mechanical motion, but electricity opens the way

to turning *all* forms of energy—heat, mechanical motion, electricity, magnetism, light—into each other and back and using them in industry.... This discovery frees industry completely from almost all the limitations imposed by local conditions.”¹

Coal was still the principal source of energy: in the period 1860-1900 world-wide coal consumption increased 5.5-fold. At the same time, the output of oil began to grow. While formerly oil had been used mainly for lighting, the invention of the internal combustion engine gave it a huge new sphere of application. As a result, the world's oil output, which amounted to 800,000 tons in 1870, went up to 19,500,000 tons in 1900. New horizons were thus opened for industrial progress, but in the period we are reviewing, the steam machine was still the main motor of industry.

The rapid development of metallurgy gave a huge impetus to industrial growth. A new method of converting pig iron into steel, invented by the Englishman Henry Bessemer, and of making steel from pig iron in furnaces developed by the Frenchman Pierre Emile Martin, became widespread. In 1878 the English metallurgist Sidney Gilchrist Thomas developed a method for eliminating phosphorus from iron, making it possible to use large deposits of phosphorous iron ore. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century the world's steel output grew 56-fold. This gave the foundation for the rapid expansion of engineering. Capitalism moved from the “iron” to the “steel” age.

The transition from the steam-driven hammer to powerful rolling mills ensured the mass production of steel slabs, pipes, and rails. The possibility was thus created for the wide development of rail transport and ocean shipping. The total length of railways grew from 210,000 to 790,000 kilometres in the period from 1870 to 1900. In Europe a particularly dense network of railways was built in Britain and Germany. Several coast-to-coast railways were built in the USA in the last 30 years of the nineteenth century, and at the close of that century the super-long Siberian railway, running to the Pacific, was completed in Russia. Railways were under construction in India, Japan, and other countries.

At sea the sail vessel was gradually ousted by large steel-hulled, screw-driven steamships, which greatly speeded up transport and mail communication. Telegraph lines were built on a huge scale. By 1900 their total length had reached 4,300,000 kilometres.

Electric power gave rise to new, more advanced methods of processing metals: electric welding, electric smelting, and so on, bringing to life new industries. The manufacture of turbines and electric dynamos was a major breakthrough. A significant achievement in

¹ Engels and Eduard Bernstein, 27. Februar 1883, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1967, S. 444-45.

the chemical industry was the production of new, cheap synthetic dyes that drove costly vegetable dyes from the market. Chemicals began to be used also in agriculture.

At the same time, the technical progress of the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century strikingly revealed the depth of the contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production. The possibilities for applying the then advanced scientific and technical innovations were practically limitless. But, in fact, industrialists obstructed the use of these innovations, even setting up insuperable barriers. For instance, the use of three-phase alternating current, which was indispensable for transmitting electric power over long distances, encountered stiff resistance from the owners of technically obsolete power stations built in the preceding period. Gas companies stubbornly hindered the introduction of electric lighting. Some industries continued to use manual labour, which in those years was more profitable to the capitalists than advanced equipment. Further evidence of this was the buying up and cold-storing of patents as a form of struggle to remain competitive while using obsolete machinery. Industries that installed advanced machinery swiftly outstripped those that clung to old equipment. The imbalances in the development of individual industries, implicit in capitalism, grew more glaring than ever before.

The considerable acceleration of technological progress during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the rapid growth of industry in many countries with a wide diversity of conditions greatly intensified the uneven, spasmodic economic development of individual countries. An example of this is that between 1870 and 1900 the physical volume of industrial output increased by 80 per cent in Britain, 100 per cent in France, and 270 per cent in Germany; in the USA it also grew by 270 per cent but within a shorter period—from 1880 to 1900.

An approximate picture of the changed share of the leading capitalist countries in the world's industrial product in the period from 1870 to 1900 is given by the following figures¹:

(in %)	1870	1880	1890	1900
Britain	32	28	22	18
USA	23	28	31	31
Germany	13	13	14	16
France	10	9	8	7
Russia	4	3	3	6
Others	18	19	22	22

¹ J. Kuczynski, *Essays on the History of the World Economy*, Moscow, 1954 p. 27 (in Russian).

In 1860 the USA was still in fourth place for the volume of industrial output, but in the 1880s it outstripped all the other capitalist nations, including Britain, to step into first place and become a highly developed industrial-agrarian country. The USA owes this swift industrial development to the absence of big landed estates, the abundance of free land, the availability of large natural resources and convenient river and sea communications, the import of capital from Britain and other European nations, and the steady influx of immigrant labour.

Germany, too, left Britain behind in the rate of industrial development. While that nation's unification took place in a form extremely prejudicial to the working people, it nonetheless gave the productive forces a powerful impetus for growth. This was also facilitated by the enormous reparations imposed on France in 1871. Since the industrial revolution was consummated in Germany much later than in Britain and France, it was able to use the experience of the latter two nations and immediately go over to the building of what for those years was an advanced industry.

Thus Britain's industrial monopoly was broken by the appearance of a number of large industrialised powers that entered into a savage struggle among themselves. Naturally, this changed the world situation fundamentally compared with the 1860s and the early 1870s. True, Britain retained its financial hegemony and its position as the world's leading commercial power. In 1900 it was in control of 19 per cent of the world's foreign trade, while the USA and Germany had 12 and 13 per cent respectively of that trade. France's share was more modest—only 9 per cent. Small-scale production was still largely prevalent in France. The predominance of bank over industrial capital, which had become perceptible earlier, grew much more pronounced in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. In Italy industrial growth was held up by the preservation of landed estates and other survivals of feudalism, which were most strongly rooted in the nation's southern regions. Manufacturing and large-scale capitalist agriculture developed chiefly in the north—in Lombardy and Piedmont; in the other regions the factories were mostly small and medium and had a fairly low technical level.

Of the small countries of Western Europe, only Belgium, where the bourgeoisie made wide use of the potentialities opened up with the seizure of huge colonies in the Congo basin in the 1880s, achieved a high level of industrial development. The exploitation of colonies was of immense significance also for the Dutch bourgeoisie; Holland had large textile and shipbuilding industries, but trade, shipping, and agriculture predominated. In the economy of the Scandinavian countries, particularly Denmark and Norway, agriculture and fishing remained the principal industries.

In most of Austria-Hungary, and in the East European and Balkan countries the industrial revolution neared completion only in the last quarter of the nineteenth and even at the beginning of the twentieth century. True, there were some vital distinctions there. For instance, for the level of industrial development Bohemia and Moravia were ahead of some West European countries and held first place in Austria-Hungary, especially in heavy industry. At the end of the nineteenth century they were producing 90 per cent of the coal, 82 per cent of the lignite, and upwards of 90 per cent of the steel of the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, exemplifying the total collapse of the policy of artificially holding up the industrial growth of the ethnic regions pursued by the Hapsburg monarchy. Industrial growth was relatively rapid in some Polish lands, including Upper Silesia, which was one of the main mining and metallurgical regions of the Germany of those years, and in the Kingdom of Poland, which, in addition to these branches, had textile and some other industries. As early as 1890 the Kingdom of Poland was only a little behind the St. Petersburg industrial region for the level of industrial output.

Nevertheless, during this period the economy of the countries of this region lagged behind that of Western Europe, chiefly on account of belated and timid bourgeois reforms, the non-consummation of the process of creating nation states, and the continued (in some cases, intensified) oppression of innumerable peoples. At the turn of the century Austria-Hungary was the world's seventh biggest producer of pig iron, lagging behind not only the USA, Germany, Britain, and France, but also Belgium and Russia; the same was to be observed in other key indicators of industrial power.

For the level of capitalist development Russia, too, was behind (although to a lesser degree) the quartette of leading powers. Tsarism, the estate system, and countless other feudal survivals remained a major impediment to rapid economic growth. Nevertheless, the productive forces expanded. The number of factories in Russia rose from 2,500-3,000 in 1886 to 6,000 in 1890. Better transport led to the growth of old and the emergence of new industrial centres and to the expansion of the domestic market. From the above table it is seen that by 1900 Russia had drawn close to France's development level.

In the Balkan countries the economy remained dependent on agriculture, although even there, especially in the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century, industrial development began to pick up, chiefly through the building of food-processing facilities. At the same time, individual heavy industry plants related to the needs of railway construction appeared in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. Romania began the development of oil fields at Ploëști.

In Greece considerable headway was made by merchant shipping and the sea foods industry.

Outside Europe and North America capitalist enclaves grew visibly in Latin America and Asia, but their share of the world's industrial output was still very negligible.

Moreover, capitalism's increasingly pronounced uneven development, heralding its evolution into a new stage, was seen, as we have already mentioned, in the considerable imbalance of the growth rates of industry and agriculture. "Agriculture," Lenin wrote, "lags behind industry in development; this is a feature of *all* capitalist countries constituting one of the most profound causes of disproportion between the various branches of the economy, of crises and soaring prices."¹

During the closing decades of the nineteenth century capitalist methods of production penetrated more and more deeply into agriculture, especially where this was not hindered by survivals of feudalism such as landed estates and semi-serfdom. Capitalist relations had long become established in Britain's agriculture where small peasant households were by now almost entirely non-existent. In France, on the contrary, small peasant holdings predominated. In the Polish lands, East Germany, Austria-Hungary, South Italy, Romania, most of Russia, and some other countries, the development of capitalism in agriculture followed different variants of the Prussian pattern, in other words, the landed estates and various semi-feudal practices persisted. In Russia four-fifths of the privately owned land belonged to the nobility at the close of the 1870s. The low productivity of the small peasant household and the enormous absolute ground rent exacted from the peasants by the landowners discouraged investments in agriculture.

Also, agricultural development was slow because from 1875 to almost the end of the nineteenth century agriculture of European countries was in the grip of a crisis of overproduction, which was aggravated by competition from cheap overseas grain. The agrarian crisis speeded the stratification of the peasantry. Debts deprived land-hungry peasants of land, which went to the more prosperous peasants, the kulaks. The peasantry was saddled with survivals of feudalism and capitalist exploitation. The small purchasing power of the millions-strong mass of the population engaged in agriculture triggered more and more frequent and longer industrial crises, which clearly pointed to the basic vices of the capitalist mode of production.

In the course of less than 30 years the capitalist world was hit by four such crises. The crisis of 1873 was particularly severe and long,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 94.

lasting nearly six years together with the slump that followed. One of its features was that more than any preceding crisis, and in some countries for the first time, it affected heavy industry. The industrial boom of the close of the 1870s and the early 1880s was shortlived; there was a crippling crisis in 1882-1886, particularly in the USA. Germany was one of the main centres of the crisis that broke out in the first half of the 1890s. The subsequent improvement of the situation was very uneven (in the USA it started only in 1897), but it was considerable: by that time the productive forces had reached a level where they ensured a steep growth of output even within a short span of time. The next economic crisis, in 1900, was one of the main factors behind pre-monopoly capitalism's evolution into imperialism.

TRANSITION TO THE IMPERIALIST STAGE

The technical progress of the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century demanded increasing outlays on industrial plant. The very nature of means of production such as blast and open-hearth furnaces, rolling mills, and equipment for the chemical industry demanded large investments. In Germany, for instance, the investments per blast furnace, due to its increased size, grew 2.5-fold in the period from 1887 to the turn of the century; the productivity of the new furnaces grew even more. The use of technical innovations proved to be economically profitable, especially at factories with a high concentration of production capacities. In the USA the output of pig iron rose from four to 14 million tons and the number of metallurgical plants dropped from 341 to 241 within 20 years (between 1880 and 1900). The total cost of the USA's industrial product increased sixfold in 1860-1900, while the number of factories grew only by 47 per cent. "Every accumulation," Marx wrote, "becomes the means of new accumulation. With the increasing mass of wealth which functions as capital, accumulation increases the concentration of that wealth in the hands of individual capitalists, and thereby widens the basis of production on a large scale and of the specific methods of capitalist production."¹

In a fierce competitive struggle large enterprises with a higher rate of and huge total profit got the better of small factories using obsolete equipment, ruining the owners of many of them. This was to be distinctly observed during economic crisis years.

In Germany's mining and metallurgical industries the proportion of enterprises employing from 11 to 50 workers dropped from 5.4 per cent in 1882 to 3.5 per cent in 1895, while the proportion of those employing over 1,000 workers increased from 34 to 45 per cent.

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 585.

In the engineering industry the proportion of the first of the above-mentioned groups of enterprises fell in the same period from 20.5 to 18.7 per cent, while that of the latter group rose from 8.1 to 10.4 per cent.

However, the accumulation capacity of the individual capitalist is limited. For him the only source of accumulation is surplus value produced at the factory owned by him. Production can also be expanded with loan capital, the interest rate for which is paid out of the selfsame surplus value.

Throughout the history of capitalism this contradiction was resolved by centralising capital, in other words, by two or several independent capitalists pooling their resources and forming a common capital. But even this had its limits and was far from enough for the founding and operation of new industries and large enterprises using the latest scientific and technological innovations of the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The centralisation of capital in the form of shares was the only way to concentrate a large number of individual capitals and free money in the hands of a few people and thereby allow founding unprecedentedly large factories. As early as the dawn of the development of the joint-stock form Marx saw its capacity for enlarging production to colossal dimensions. He wrote that the introduction of "joint-stock companies in industry ushers in a new epoch in the economic life of contemporary nations.... It has demonstrated such potentialities for forming production corporations as were not suspected earlier, and has brought to life industrial enterprises of a magnitude beyond the capability of individual capitalists."¹

During the last 25 years of the nineteenth century joint-stock companies appeared throughout Europe and in North America. They obtained control of production assets many times larger than their own.

This (joint-stock) form of capitalist property greatly facilitated the rise of monopolies with the enlargement of factories as the motive force of this process. Lenin wrote that "at a certain stage of its development concentration itself, as it were, leads straight to monopoly".² The larger the factories and the fewer of them determine the bulk of output in one industry or other, the easier it is for them to come to terms or to merge capitals. "...A score or so of giant enterprises can easily arrive at an agreement."³

The formation of monopolies was stimulated by the high profit rate of large factories, their advantages in the competitive struggle,

¹ Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 12, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, S. 33.

² V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 197.

³ Ibid.

and their greater marketing capacity. Once it commenced, the process of monopolisation broadened, embracing one industry after another. "This transformation of competition into monopoly," Lenin wrote, "is one of the most important—if not the most important—phenomena of modern capitalist economy."¹

Intensive concentration of production and the rise of monopolies were to be observed not only in the most highly industrialised countries but also in countries with a relatively low level of industrial development. Monopolies were formed in most West European countries, and in Russia and Japan. In the 1870s these associations were still very unstable, frequently coming apart and being replaced by others; they had little influence on the economy. But in the 1890s they began exercising a perceptible influence on the course of economic development.

As early as 1893, when it was founded, the Rhine-Westphalia coal syndicate marketed 86.7 per cent of the coal mined in Germany's most industrialised region. In 1897 pig iron production in this region was controlled by two concerns: Rhine-Westphalia and Lorraine-Luxembourg. In Germany cartels were the predominant form of monopoly associations, and in 1896 there already were as many as 250. In the USA, the main form were trusts, of which there were 185 by 1900.² The monopolies artificially maintained high prices on goods, dividing markets among themselves and determining the size of output. In Germany, they began seeking the establishment of high customs tariffs on imports as early as the close of the 1870s. The trend towards protectionism, which served the interests of monopolies, was strong in some other countries as well. "A monopoly, once it is formed and controls thousands of millions," Lenin wrote, "inevitably penetrates into *every* sphere of public life, regardless of the form of government."³

Concentration of production and the process of monopolisation in industry led to the concentration and centralisation of capital in banks. The accumulation of capital in industry generated the need for profitable investment, thus increasing the inflow of deposits in banks and widening the scope of banking operations. At the same time, the development and expansion of industry gave rise to a growing demand for credits.

This immeasurably enhanced the role of the biggest finance institutions. Their large reserves and stability in time of crisis made them best adjusted to the accumulation of large deposits from the industrial monopolies.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., pp. 202-03.

³ Ibid., p. 237.

Finance institutions of this kind had a vast sphere of activity territorially maintained by a far-flung network of branches in which the money not only of big but also of small depositors was concentrated. They were the only institutions in a position to meet the huge demand of industrial monopolies for unparalleled credits and loans, some of which were extended on a long-term basis.

As competition sharpened the big finance institutions swallowed small and medium banks to form giant banking corporations that became powerful finance centres of the given countries. At the turn of the century there were essentially only three such centres in France and two in the USA. "Among the few banks which remain at the head of all capitalist economy as a result of the process of concentration, there is naturally to be observed an increasingly marked tendency towards monopolist agreements, towards a *bank trust*," Lenin wrote, concluding that, as in industry, "the final word in the development of banking is monopoly."¹ He noted that the "transformation of numerous modest middlemen into a handful of monopolists is one of the fundamental processes in the growth of capitalism into capitalist imperialism".²

Monopolisation of industry and of banking were interacting and mutually accelerating processes. For example, German banks facilitated the formation of monopolies in the electrical engineering industry, helping in 1883 to set up the first corporation in that industry; in 1887 it became known as the Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft (AEG). An analogous role was played by banks in other industries and in other countries.

The concentration of capital and the development of finance monopolies gave banks a totally new dimension in the capitalist economy. This, Lenin wrote, signified that "a handful of monopolists subordinate to their will all the operations, both commercial and industrial, of the whole of capitalist society; for they are enabled—by means of their banking connections, their current accounts and other financial operations—first, to *ascertain exactly* the financial position of the various capitalists, then to *control* them, to influence them by restricting or enlarging, facilitating or hindering credits, and finally to *entirely determine* their fate, determine their income, deprive them of capital, or permit them to increase their capital rapidly and to enormous dimensions, etc."³

By penetrating industry, transport, commerce, and the services sector, the banks become direct co-owners of these branches and get their share of the superprofits. Their participation in the creation of new joint-stock companies assures them so-called foundation profits.

¹ Ibid., pp. 219-20.

² Ibid., p. 210.

³ Ibid., pp. 214-15.

In turn, the big industrial monopolies seek to set up their own finance institutions or penetrate existing ones in order to retain the largest possible portion of the profits.

This is precisely what leads to an ever closer interlocking of banking and industrial interests, to their fusion through mutual ownership of shares and, on this basis, the formation of a new form of capital—finance capital.

The content and theoretical substance of this process were defined by Lenin as follows: "The concentration of production; the monopolies arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of the banks with industry—such is the history of the rise of finance capital and such is the content of that concept."¹ "...Finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists."²

The latter was personified by the finance oligarchy—a small group of industrial and banking barons. They owned fabulous material values and controlled the economic levers that made them masters of entire nations. The US billionaires J. P. Morgan and J. D. Rockefeller were typical members of the finance oligarchy. The former had his capital in the Steel and Electric trusts, railways, shipbuilding capacities, insurance companies, and various industrial corporations. Rockefeller controlled the lion's share of the USA's oil, coal, copper, and tobacco output and owned several railways. In addition, Morgan and Rockefeller each headed a large banking group. Influential members of the finance oligarchy included the Du Pont, the Mellons, the Harrimans, the Vanderbilts, and the Guggenheims. Analogous groups came into being in other countries where capitalism entered the imperialist stage.

Capitalism's transition to the monopoly stage, "from the old capitalism to the new, from the domination of capital in general to the domination of finance capital",³ was the outcome of the development of the capitalist mode of production. Free competition—an inherent feature of capitalism and commodity society based on private property—inescapably gives rise to monopoly. But once it emerges and becomes predominant, monopoly by its very existence undercuts and restricts free competition. Monopoly domination does not root out non-monopoly enterprises, but drastically reduces the scale of their operations. The forcible inclusion of non-monopoly enterprises into the system of monopoly relations exacerbates that system's internal contradictions.

The economic crisis of 1900-1903 gave a powerful impetus to the assertion of the power of monopoly capital. This crisis, to quote

¹ Ibid., p. 226.

² Ibid., p. 266.

³ Ibid., p. 226.

Lenin, was "the turning-point in the history of modern monopoly."¹ From 1900 onwards the concentration of capital and the centralisation of industry developed "with giant strides"².

In the USA 5.3 times more big trusts were formed in the period from 1898 to 1903 than in the preceding 50 years. One of these, the giant Steel Trust, founded in 1901, was run by the Morgan group. From the very outset it controlled more than two-fifths of the nation's pig iron, half of its rolled stock, and two-thirds of its steel. Two other trusts, which likewise became pillars of US monopoly capital, were the Du Pont de Nemours gunpowder trust and the Ford motor company, both of which were founded in 1903. The Rockefeller oil trust, which took the name Standard Oil of New Jersey, was founded somewhat earlier, in 1900, as a holding company in order to circumvent the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act; in 1904 it was in control of 84 per cent of the oil-refining industry, 86 per cent of the kerosene-producing capacities, and almost the entire network of oil pipelines in the USA. Roughly the same position was gained by the copper, lead, tobacco, and some other trusts founded in the early years of the twentieth century.³

This extremely high level of monopolisation of the economy was surpassed in Germany. There were more monopoly associations in that nation than in the USA, and their number continued to grow. When the Rhine-Westphalia coal syndicate was reorganised in 1903 it absorbed 100 enterprises that until then had been independent. This mirrored the tendency of the heavy industry monopolies to combine allied industries as a way of increasing their own power in the struggle against local and foreign competitors.

From the standpoint of monopolisation, 1903 was a turning point in Germany as in the USA. A steel syndicate, Eisenwirtschaftsbund, which controlled nine-tenths of the nation's steel output, was formed in that year. A large role was played here by the big banks. That same year saw a merger in the electrical engineering industry with the result that three-fourths of that industry fell into the hands of two syndicates: AEG and Siemens-Schuckert. By 1904 the chemical industry had come under the control of two giant groups: Interessengemeinschaft headed by Karl Duisberg (forerunner of I. G. Farben) and a syndicate of chemical firms in Frankfurt-Hoechst. Even sugar-refining was monopolised: the cartel that was formed controlled 450 refineries, i.e., practically the entire sugar industry.

In Britain the rate of monopolisation was slower, but there, too, concentration quickened visibly in the early years of the twentieth

¹ Ibid., p. 209.

² Ibid., p. 246.

³ L. A. Mendelson, *Theory and History of Economic Crises and Cycles*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1959, p. 508 (in Russian).

century, affecting mainly armaments-making. As a result of a number of mergers in 1900-1904 in that industry—of major importance to the British capitalists, who had long been exporting weaponry to scores of countries—two large corporations came to prominence: Armstrong and Vickers.¹ The Portland cement trust, which cornered 89 per cent of the nation's cement output, was formed in 1900. The monopolisation level was approximately the same in cotton fabrics and somewhat lower in the tobacco trade and other fields.

In Russia monopoly associations were formed and acquired strength very quickly. The largest of these, Prodamet, was marketing roughly 70-80 per cent of the nation's sheet and universal iron, girders, and other products in the early years of the twentieth century. In 1904 the Truboprodazha syndicate had almost a total monopoly over the marketing of pipes in Russia. The Produgol coal syndicate, which consisted of major enterprises in the Donets basin, controlled most of the coal output in that region. Analogous coal monopolies sprang up in the Urals and in the Dombrovsky basin; together with the Donets syndicate they controlled the nation's entire coal output. Southern cement factories formed a syndicate, as did 18 Chiatura manganese mines; several railway carriage factories established the Prodvagon syndicate, and so on. Monopolisation gradually spilled over into key branches of the consumer goods industry.

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century the export of commodities began to be increasingly paralleled by the export of capital. In order to maximise profits "surplus" British, French, and German capital poured into countries where land, raw materials, and labour were cheap. For the monopolies this held the promise of larger profits than foreign trade. Between 1875 and 1900 the British capital invested abroad increased by nearly 100 per cent, that of France by 125 per cent, and Germany's by 650 per cent.²

The USA, where capital accumulation had likewise grown to impressive dimensions, joined in the export of capital (chiefly to Canada, the Hawaiian Islands, and Cuba and other Latin American states). Other countries, which themselves were markets for foreign capital investment, took part in the financial enslavement of foreign countries. For instance, Austria-Hungary, whose economy received heavy investments of German and French capital, exported capital to the Balkan states. Russia and Japan, which were debtor nations, invested capital in China, Korea, and the Middle East.

The migration of "surplus" capital to other countries, Lenin wrote, "may tend to a certain extent to arrest development in the capital-

¹ Ibid., p. 511.

² A. K. Cairncross, *Home and Foreign Investment. 1870-1913. Studies in Capital Accumulation*, The University Press, Cambridge, 1953, p. 209.

exporting countries".¹ He was referring chiefly to the oldest capitalist powers—Britain and France: since the export of capital grew steadily compared with the export of commodities there was a tendency of them becoming rentier nations.

In 1900-1905 British capital migrated at an annual rate averaging £64 million. The investments in the nation's economy amounted to roughly £72 million annually. Thus, almost half of the funds that could be channelled into expanding and modernising the production facilities of Britain (whose lagging behind other major capitalist powers in the rate of growth had by then become perceptible) was exported.

A similar situation was observed in France, where at the beginning of the century the export of capital—which had grown steadily compared with the export of commodities—exceeded the national income. This was realised chiefly in the form of loans. This, as Lenin noted, was "*loan capital, government loans, and not capital invested in industrial undertakings.*"² Huge sums of money were thus artificially exacted from nations whose productive forces were showing a slow rate of development; moreover, in recipient countries most of this money was used unproductively. The French investments in Russia are extremely indicative in this context. They consisted largely of loans to the tsarist government and, consequently, helped to keep an extremely reactionary regime in power.

Precisely this period saw the final shaping of the capitalist world economy—a global system of oppression, exploitation, and enslavement of the bulk of the world's population by finance capital, by the finance oligarchy of a few imperialist states. The economic integration of peoples and the end to national isolation resulting from the widespread development of railways and shipping, the appearance of a new international division of labour, and the internationalisation of economic life could, under imperialism, be embodied solely in the oppression and enslavement of some nations by others.

The consummation of the world's economic and territorial division, which ushered in the epoch of imperialism, was a factor that played a decisive part in giving rise to the capitalist world economy. International monopolies began to be formed as early as the 1880s by agreements between large monopoly groups of different countries on the partitioning of markets, a price policy, the size of the output, and so forth. One of the first of these was an international rail cartel set up in 1884 by British, Belgian, and German companies, but it was shortlived. A gunpowder cartel was also formed in the 1880s.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 243.

² *Ibid.*

However, all these new associations were still very unstable on account of the non-completion of monopolisation and the absence of powerful monopolies in the countries concerned.

In the early years of the twentieth century the situation changed. The international rail cartel was revived in 1904, but compared with the 1880s the distribution norm was now different: Britain's share was substantially reduced, while that of Germany and Belgium increased; this accorded with the changes that had taken place in the economic potentials of these countries. France, the USA, and some other nations soon joined the rail cartel; the world was divided among the rail producers (the demand for rails was very high in this period, which witnessed continued intensified railway construction in many parts of the world).

As Lenin noted, in "merchant shipping, the tremendous development of concentration has ended also in the division of the world."¹ In Germany this industry was monopolised by two giant shipping companies: Hamburg-Amerika and Norddeutscher Lloyd. The International Mercantile Marine Company, formed under the aegis of the Morgan group in 1903, amalgamated several US and British companies. That same year German and Anglo-US companies concluded an agreement under which the former pledged not to compete in shipping between Britain and the USA, but they "obtained" the harbours they wanted and some other benefits.

"This," Lenin wrote, "is a new stage of world concentration of capital and production, incomparably higher than the preceding stages."² The struggle against this actually single world-wide trust was extraordinarily difficult; as in individual countries, the international monopolies stopped at nothing, including undisguised acts of crime, to throttle competitors. But the terms under which the monopoly associations divided the world among themselves could only be transient. A redivision was inevitable "if the relation of forces changes as a result of uneven development, war, bankruptcy, etc."³

The establishment of international monopoly associations was further evidence that the capitalism of free competition was evolving into imperialism. Monopolisation of the external market was accompanied by a drive for colonies, which became guaranteed markets and sources of raw materials. An expression of this drive was the sharp aggravation of the struggle for the world's territorial partition in the 1870s-1890s. It was during these decades that European powers seized the African continent; in 1876 they ruled only 10.8 per cent of the continent, but in 1900 they were in control of 90.4 per cent of its territory. The same fate overcame most of the Southeast Asian

¹ Ibid., p. 251.

² Ibid., p. 246.

³ Ibid., p. 248.

countries and the Pacific islands. As a result of the colonial policy of the capitalist countries, "the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet"¹ was completed towards the end of the nineteenth century. Capitalism's colonial system took final shape. Pressure by the strongest capitalist powers on undeveloped feudal and semi-feudal countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America reached its peak.

Britain seized the Fiji Islands and Baluchistan in the 1870s, and Egypt in 1882. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century the British colonialists took possession of vast territories in Southern and Equatorial Africa and finally subjugated Burma. In the period 1860-1899 Britain's colonial empire grew from 2,500,000 to 9,300,000 square miles, its population thereby increasing from 145,100,000 to 309 million.² At the close of the nineteenth century there were nearly 10 persons in terms of the colonial population per one inhabitant of Britain.

France took possession of large territories in Africa and Asia. Bloody colonial wars brought it the whole of Vietnam and Madagascar. In 1900 it was in possession of 34 per cent of Africa.

Germany, the USA, and Japan likewise embarked upon colonial expansion. In 1884-1888 the German empire embraced first huge territories in Africa and New Guinea, and then islands in the Pacific. But having started building up a colonial empire later than the British and French imperialists, the German imperialists felt they had been done out of their share. At the close of the nineteenth century the USA annexed the Hawaiian Islands and seized the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam. Cuba was turned into a semi-colony of US imperialism.

Altogether, in 1900 the colonial possessions of the capitalist states covered a territory of 73 million square kilometres (about 55 per cent of the world) with a population of 530 million (or 35 per cent of the world's population). The capitalist powers intensified their enslavement of China, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan in the closing years of the nineteenth century: these formally independent nations became semi-colonies. Latin American states began falling into similar dependence upon Britain or the USA. As it penetrated colonies and semi-colonies, capitalism was inclined to conserve their survivals of feudalism and some pre-capitalist forms of exploitation.

The profits from the colonies went to the big capitalist companies, while the cost of colonial wars and of administering colonies was shifted to the shoulders of the working people. The people of the colonial powers had to pay with their blood for the colonial policies of the ruling classes. The bourgeoisie used imperialism's vast colonial

¹ Ibid., p. 254.

² Ibid., p. 255.

domain to sow chauvinistic feeling among the people of the colonial powers.

After the world had, in the main, been partitioned by the capitalist powers, military force was the only way the few remaining undivided territories (Morocco, for instance) could be seized or part of a rival's prey wrested from him. An armed struggle for the repartition of the world began as early as the end of the 1890s: the Spanish-American war of 1898 precipitated by the USA's intention to seize Cuba and the Philippines, and the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902, which broke out as a result of Britain's determination to gain possession of the Orange and the Transvaal republics in South Africa. These were the first imperialist wars, the first harbingers of world-wide cataclysms generated by monopoly capital domination.

The inauguration of the stage of imperialism did not annul the laws implicit in capitalism as a socio-economic system. "But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership," Engels wrote, "does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces.... The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head."¹ However, the laws of capitalism underwent some modification, acquiring some features that had been non-existent or existed only in embryo in the pre-monopoly period.

But the main point is that imperialism is the last stage of capitalism, "the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat."² The commencement of the imperialist stage saw all the contradictions of the capitalist system growing acute to an extent leading directly to the revolutionary overthrow of the power of the finance oligarchy.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE

By 1871 the epoch of bourgeois revolutions had ended in Western Europe and in the USA, but in the East the requisites for these revolutions had not yet matured; they began only in the early years of the twentieth century. The objective and subjective conditions for the socialist revolution in the industrially advanced capitalist countries were only emerging. The immediate tasks of the working class during the closing decades of the nineteenth century were to muster forces, set up proletarian parties, step up the struggle for the economic interests and political rights of workers, and organise the masses for a determined struggle against the capitalist system.

¹ Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 145.

² V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 194.

Of course, in order to achieve these aims it was of paramount significance to win or extend bourgeois-democratic freedoms, which were vital for the functioning of the political parties of the proletariat and the trade unions. "Without parliamentarism, without an electoral system", Lenin wrote, "... development of the working class would have been impossible."¹

The struggle to extend and consolidate democratic freedoms—or secure their introduction where they were non-existent—was becoming a crucial and inseparable element of the working-class liberation movement, a condition for uniting non-proletarian sections of the people around the working class. The working class could rise to the status of leader of all the exploited masses who lacked civil rights and win allies only by consistently fighting for democracy. It is in this that the proletariat as a class was to demonstrate the characteristic mentioned by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*: by liberating itself the proletariat liberates the whole of society.

The working class had earlier participated in the struggle for democracy. But on a national scale the leadership of that struggle had been entirely in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The situation changed drastically at the end of the nineteenth century. In the developed nations, while continuing to operate with rhetoric about democracy, the bourgeoisie gradually turned into a force incapable and reluctant to fight for the total and effective satisfaction of the demands that had been made a century before by its advanced representatives. It feared—not without grounds—that the satisfaction of these demands would place a weapon in the hands of its main class antagonist.

In many countries the bourgeoisie shared power with the semi-feudal aristocracy as a junior partner. Its relatively weak political influence and its inadequate position in the economy were largely due to the fact that feeling the mounting pressure of the proletariat it grew increasingly more irresolute relative to absolutist power. In the new situation it saw such power not so much as an inhibiting factor as a protector against the rising "lower" strata.

Every democratic reform was either the direct outcome of the working-class struggle or an indirect result of that struggle, when sensible bourgeois politicians preferred to retreat opportunely to prevent taking the class struggle to extremes. Moreover, the bourgeoisie was itself interested in a minimum of democratic freedoms, in parliamentarism, for that produced a certain equilibrium between the propertied classes and gave it some advantages over the big landowners and the aristocracy. However limited their powers, representative institutions held monarchs and the bureaucracy in check and

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 486.

facilitated the spread of ideological and political influence on the masses. This was noted by Lenin, who wrote: "Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without certain political rights for the population."¹

In turn, this was of vital significance for the proletariat. "The proletariat," Lenin wrote, exposing the views of the "leftist" Gustave Hervé, "cannot be indifferent to the political, social and cultural conditions of its struggle." He showed the untenability of the view spread by Hervé and like-minded people that "it is of no concern to the proletariat in what country it lives—in monarchical Germany, republican France or despotic Turkey."² He insisted that the working class had to be active in the democratic movement and that this participation was a significant factor of its political education. This was most essential from the standpoint of the struggle for the ultimate aim of the working class, namely, the overthrow of capitalist rule, and it must not be eclipsed by any specific, immediate aim of any given moment.

"To bring political knowledge to the *workers*," Lenin wrote, "the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population*." The ideal Social-Democrat, he noted, is "*the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation."³ The proletariat has the mission of being the foremost fighter for democracy. In the course of this struggle it naturally wins the support of the other strata, whose interests it champions.

These truths had to be brought home time and again, for in the situation obtaining during those decades far from all the participants in the working-class movement understood that it was mandatory for the proletariat and its party to take part in the day-to-day political struggle. On the one hand, this was due to the pernicious influence of anarchism and also of anarcho-syndicalism with their preaching of "direct action", which ruled out any intervention in political life; very similar views were propounded by the Russian Narodniks, whose ideas influenced the activity of the first workers' organisations in Russia. On the other hand, some exponents of Marxism contended

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Differences in the European Labour Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1967, p. 350.

² V. I. Lenin, "Bellicose Militarism and the Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, pp. 194-95.

³ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 422, 423.

that the political struggle affected the interests only of the bourgeoisie and had no significance for the proletariat, and consequently there was no need for taking part in it. Analogous sectarian views were articulated by, for example, the leaders of the Workers' Party in France, especially by Jules Guesde. These views surged into prominence for the first time in connection with the Boulanger crisis of the end of the 1880s, when there was the threat that a military dictatorship under General Boulanger would be imposed on the nation. However, the followers of Guesde did not see this danger. The same threat emerged later, in the 1890s, at the height of the struggle over the Dreyfus affair. One of the mainsprings of this attitude to participation in day-to-day political life was the fairly widespread opinion that this was superfluous because the victory of the proletariat was around the corner.

In fact, however, the dissimilarities in the state system of different countries played a paramount role in the prospects for the liberation struggle of the proletariat. In some countries the working class was still denied all legal possibilities for the struggle, such as were provided by bourgeois-democratic freedoms and parliamentarism. Such was the situation in some monarchies, particularly in Eastern Europe. Police tyranny reigned in Austria-Hungary and to an even greater extent in tsarist Russia. The least action against the existing orders was mercilessly crushed, strikes were usually suppressed by police and troops, and workers' organisations were banned. The vast majority of the population had no civil rights whatever. Nevertheless, the absolutist system was steadily undermined from within; in Russia there was a revolutionary situation at the end of the 1870s and it was only by a titanic effort that tsarism rode the storm. Subsequently, its resources continued to diminish, but it stubbornly opposed any reform. In the Balkans most of the population was in a similar position, especially in countries still oppressed by feudal, sultan-ruled Turkey. This, too, was the lot of the working people in Japan and other Eastern countries.

The conditions for working-class action were much better in Western Europe, where the workers had won some political rights in the course of bourgeois-democratic revolutions. But there, too, the struggle for democratic reforms continued, with the proletariat playing the vanguard role. As a result of pressure by the working people universal male suffrage was constitutionalised in France in 1875, in Spain in 1890, and in Belgium in 1893. The ruling classes were compelled to extend suffrage in Italy (1882) and in the Netherlands (1896). But almost everywhere women continued to be denied this right. However, the movement for the democratic reforms attainable under the capitalist system was not confined to a struggle for suffrage. The struggle for factory legislation, for a legislative limit

on working time, and also for measures benefiting the proletariat's potential allies was of immense significance for the working class. Lastly, there was the question of upholding and protecting rights that had been won but were under attack from the reactionaries in the ruling camp, or of crushing their attempts to abolish the parliamentary regime. Everywhere there was, thus, a broad basis for the democratic movement: in countries where elementary democratic freedoms were still to be won and in those where they had been won but where the task was to defend them and wring further concessions from the bourgeoisie.

One aspect of the democratic struggle that most directly concerned the interests of the proletariat was the nationalities question. Here the issues that came to prominence were linked to the enslavement or economic subjugation of Asian, African, and Latin American countries by the imperialist powers. But there were oppressed nations even in Western Europe, where the formation of bourgeois nation states had been consummated. One of the pillars of reaction in Britain was the oppression of Ireland by the British landowners and bourgeoisie. The Poles, the Danes in Northern Schleswig, the Lusatian Sorbs, and the French-speaking population of Alsace and Lorraine were oppressed ethnic groups in Germany. Nonetheless, in these countries the population was, in the main, nationally homogeneous. The days of big national liberation movements had, by and large, passed in these countries, and prominence was gained by the internal class contradictions of capitalist society.

In Eastern Europe the situation was different: in Austria-Hungary and Russia national oppression continued unabated. The struggle of the proletariat and its organisations gave a large impetus to the liberation movement of the oppressed ethnic minorities in Austria-Hungary, increasingly shaking the decrepit edifice of the Hapsburg monarchy. In 1896 the Austrian workers achieved a partial success: this was the election reform that allowed Social-Democrats to win seats in the parliament for the first time. But another conquest of the mass movement—a reform that gave the Czech language equality with the German in Bohemia and Moravia (1897)—was violently resisted by the Austrian reactionaries. This precipitated a serious political crisis. In 1899 the reform was repealed, and Bohemia was divided according to language, as the Austrian chauvinists wanted.

This was not the only case of ruling circles adopting an adamant stand on the rights of ethnic minorities. It was a sign that capitalism was entering a new stage of its development, that the reactionary trends in the policy of the bourgeoisie mainly towards the working-class movement were obviously gathering momentum. However, a segment of the ruling circles was inclined to respond to the enhanced political activity of the "lower" classes, especially of the working

class, with individual reforms and benefits—much later this became known as a policy of social manoeuvring. But in that period the overriding tendency of the ruling classes was to deal summarily with the working class by means of repressions, sometimes in combination with minor concessions “granted from above”. This course was steered, in particular, by Otto Bismarck, Chancellor of the German Empire, who in 1878 obtained the enactment of an “extraordinary law” against Socialists (the Anti-Socialist Law) that greatly fettered the Social-Democratic Party, the trade unions, and other workers’ organisations (this law remained in force for 12 years); somewhat later certain (very limited) social insurance benefits were granted to workers. But this did not yield the expected results.

In Italy the ruling circles intended to force the working class to its knees at a time when similar attempts by Bismarck had failed and the Chancellor himself had been compelled to resign. They evidently counted on the socially less developed conditions obtaining in the country. Beginning from 1894 and up to the early twentieth century the Socialists were subjected to all sorts of repressions, even more brutal than those practised in Germany. However, the result was the same, and after 1900 a spokesman of the opposite trend, Giovanni Giolitti, came to power and endeavoured to localise the working-class movement by various social manoeuvres. But in both Germany and Italy the governing classes had by no means ruled out a return to a policy of ruthlessly suppressing the working class. An indication of this was the attempt of the German Emperor Wilhelm II to promulgate another “extraordinary law” in the mid-1890s.

At the very dawn of the working-class movement in Japan the ruling circles started savage repressions in order to strangle it in embryo. This was also the aim of the social law and order act of 1900 patterned on the Bismarck model. This act denied the workers every opportunity of uniting, and prescribed stern punishment for the establishment of any kind of organisation.

An essential element of the intensifying reactionary tendencies in bourgeois policy was the rapid growth of the bureaucracy, the police, and the regular army. These were used by the ruling classes to paralyse, among other things, what they felt were undesirable effects of the democratic reforms won by the people. Everywhere the police and the army were used more and more frequently to ruthlessly put down strikes and other working-class actions. In the USA there were also numerous investigation police and armed guards detachments employed by the capitalist companies to fight strikes and deal summarily with revolutionary workers.

The root cause of the growth of militarism was, of course, the aggravation of the struggle among the capitalist powers for domination in Europe and for the division of the world. The rise of a powerful

and aggressive German Empire in the heartland of Europe and its seizure of Alsace and Lorraine made the threat of war in Europe permanent. As early as 1862 Prussia introduced universal military conscription; France followed suit in 1872. A military reform was enforced in Russia in 1874. The growth of regular armies and the arms race gave local reaction a stronger hand and worsened the condition of the working people. Time and again "military alarms" were used as a pretext for further spending on armaments, which placed a heavy burden on the people. The creation of the Austro-German (1879) and then of the Triple Alliance (1882), and the conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance in 1893 gave a further impetus to the arms race. Europe's division into confronting blocs increased the danger of war, which meant incalculable suffering for the working class and all other working people. As early as 1870 Marx said that a European war was inevitable. This became much more obvious 15-20 years later. That is why Engels gave this question so much of his attention in the last years of his life. He made it plain that the impending war would inescapably bring Europe colossal destruction. "This would be," he wrote, "a world war of a hitherto unknown scale and ferocity. Between eight and ten million soldiers will be murdering each other."¹

The menacing growth of militarism imperatively confronted the working class with the task of fighting the designs of the military, who had the backing of influential groups of big capital. Engels was very active in this struggle, urging the workers to make a determined stand against the intention of the ruling classes of different countries to start a war. "The Socialists of all countries stand for peace,"² he declared.

The workers were induced to take vigorous action also by considerations stemming from the expanding role of the militarists in the domestic policies of the capitalist states. This was to be seen not only in Germany with its "traditional" predominance of the military in the government system, although in the 1890s there, too, the militarists began to intervene with increasing resolution in all aspects of political life, utilising the ruling circles' "policy of uniting" all the forces of the dominant camp against the working class and its allies.

The pressure being brought to bear chiefly by the militarists was seen in bold relief also in France, where there already had been several bourgeois revolutions. The most striking instance of this was the

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Einleitung zu Sigismund Borkheims Broschüre 'Zur Erinnerung für die deutschen Mordspatrioten. 1806-1807'", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 21, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1962, S. 350.

² Friedrich Engels, "Der Sozialismus in Deutschland", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963, S. 256.

Dreyfus affair. A General Staff officer and a Jew by origin, Dreyfus was charged with espionage and, on the insistence of the military, sentenced despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence. This affair, which split the nation into two camps, was evidence that the reactionaries were intent on undermining the republican system and sweeping away bourgeois-democratic institutions. Reaction acted more vigorously in Germany and tsarist Russia. The most reactionary spokesmen of the bourgeoisie, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, proclaimed a cult of violence and undisguised amorality. However, nothing could now stop the spread of the world revolutionary process.

Germany, where the Social-Democratic Party was larger and better organised than in other countries, was the centre of the world revolutionary movement during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century. But at the turn of the century the spread of opportunism deprived it of this position. By that time the centre of the world revolutionary movement had been clearly moving to Russia, whose gigantic revolutionary potential was repeatedly noted by Marx and Engels as early as the 1860s-1880s. A cardinal element of this process was the swift numerical growth of the proletariat in Russia, its conversion into the main force of the revolutionary struggle that was rallying the exploited and oppressed masses. Bolshevism took shape as a political trend and Lenin created his great teaching in the course of the fierce class battles.

The sharp collisions in France, Austria-Hungary, and Italy at the close of the 1890s and the powerful tidal wave of struggle against tsarism in Russia showed that the epoch of great class battles was drawing near. Their chief locomotive could only be the working class that had covered enormous ground in all-sided development during the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

Significant changes took place in all aspects of society's structure during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century. Capitalism's further development in breadth and depth and the spread of the industrial revolution to more countries and continents were accompanied by a tremendous growth of the army of wagedworkers and an extension of its international framework. In the industrially advanced capitalist countries the urban and rural proletariat was becoming the numerically largest section of the gainfully employed population (this was observed in Britain even before 1871). At the same time, the accelerated concentration of production and capital led to a diminution of the proportion of the big and middle bourgeoisie in the population.

The urban and rural middle strata were gradually diminishing. This process was most pronounced in Britain and the USA. In other countries, for instance, Germany and France, the middle strata still comprised about half of the gainfully employed population at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. In most of the other countries the peasantry and the urban middle strata were still predominant numerically, but their proportion was gradually decreasing.

Complex and frequently dissimilar changes took place in the composition and condition of the international proletariat. These changes reflected the diversity of the conditions under which the working class formed and developed in the epoch of transition from pre-monopoly to monopoly capitalism.

NUMERICAL GROWTH OF THE PROLETARIAT AND CHANGES IN ITS COMPOSITION

At the beginning of the 1870s there were approximately 12-13 million industrial workers in Britain, France, and the USA, which by that time had passed through the main stages of the industrial revo-

lution. Almost half of this number was in Britain. Together with the rural workers the aggregate number of proletarians in these countries exceeded 20 million.

The level of capitalist development and industrialisation was markedly dissimilar in the countries: whereas in Britain the industrial workers comprised half of the gainfully employed population, in the USA and France the respective proportions were roughly one-fourth and not above one-fifth. In only two of these countries, Britain and the USA, the industrial proletariat was numerically larger than the rural proletariat.

The picture changed significantly 30 years later. The USA moved into first place with 10,400,000 industrial workers in 1900, or three times more than in 1870. The proletariat's numerical strength increased visibly also in Germany (up to 8,600,000 in 1907), which by then had reached the final phase of the industrial revolution. There was a large contingent of industrial workers in Belgium (some one million at the close of the nineteenth century). As regards Britain, the recent "workshop of the world", the growth rate of the industrial proletariat declined perceptibly: while during the preceding 30 years (1841-1871) it had doubled, the next 30 years saw only a 40 per cent growth (from 6,000,000 to 8,500,000). An even slower numerical growth of the industrial proletariat was observed in France (3,400,000 in 1906). Nonetheless, in that country, as in Germany, the industrial proletariat surpassed the rural proletariat in terms of numerical strength.

Italy was gradually drawn into the process of industrialisation: according to the 1901 census it had 2,600,000 industrial workers. In Spain, where capitalist industry developed at a snail's pace, the numerical strength of the industrial workers grew from 176,000 in 1860 to only 244,000 in 1896. This period witnessed a rapid growth rate of the proletariat in Sweden: at the turn of the century there were nearly a million workers, including 300,000 factory workers.

The formation of the proletariat was speeded up in post-reform Russia.

On the eve of the abolition of serfdom there were in Russia 3,900,000 wageworkers, of whom approximately two million were employed in industry (including artisan crafts and building) and 700,000 in agriculture, but by the turn of the century the number of wageworkers had swelled to nearly 14 million, i.e., 3.5-fold (in agriculture the increase was at least fivefold).

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were 2,300,000 proletarians in Austria-Hungary. The number of wageworkers grew rapidly in industry in the Czech lands, going up from 400,000 in 1880 to a million in 1910. The Polish industrial proletariat numbered at least 600,000 towards the turn of the century: in the Kingdom of

Poland alone the number of workers employed in industry rose from 83,000 in 1879 to 257,000 in 1901. In Hungary, where in 1867 there were roughly 300,000 workers, chiefly artisans, the numerical strength of the industrial proletariat had grown to 700,000 by 1900. In Romanian industry there were only 28,000 workers in 1860, but in 1901-1902 there were as many as 100,000-120,000. The formation of an industrial proletariat began in Bulgaria in the 1880s (in 1905 there were 79,600 workers, including artisans).

At the turn of the century there were no fewer than 40 million industrial workers in Europe and North America. Together with the workers employed in agriculture and other branches, the army of wagedworkers in the leading capitalist countries was approximately double that figure.

The industrial revolution began gathering momentum in Japan during the last decades of the nineteenth century: the number of industrial workers (at factories employing more than 10 persons) grew from 100,700 in 1887 to 381,300 in 1894, and to 619,000 in 1904.

The changes in the composition of the proletariat, particularly of the industrial proletariat, were similarly significant. Among the latter the proportion of factory workers, chiefly of workers engaged in the manufacture of means of production, rose steadily. Whereas in 1850-1875 the most numerous contingent of the industrial proletariat consisted of workers employed at textile mills, the workers employed in mechanical engineering, metallurgy, and on the railways now moved into first place numerically. In Britain, where this process had started earlier and now developed further, the number of workers in the metalworking, mechanical engineering, and shipbuilding industries trebled in the period 1861-1881, and had increased by another 50 per cent by 1900, while the number of textile workers remained practically unchanged. This tendency was even more marked in Germany, where the industrial revolution was completed at a higher technological level. There, in the period from 1882 to 1907, i.e., within a quarter of a century, the number of machine-builders increased by 250 per cent, of metalworkers by almost 200 per cent, of miners by more than 100 per cent, and of textile workers by 70 per cent.

The factory proletariat grew numerically also in post-reform Russia, especially during the industrial upsurge of the 1890s. Compared with 1865 its numerical strength increased at least threefold, while the number of workers in the big capitalist industry grew nearly fourfold. However, the composition of the factory proletariat by branches of industry still bore the imprint of Russian capitalism's relative backwardness: workers employed in the textile and other light industries comprised the absolute majority, with those employed in the metalworking and mechanical engineering industries making

up about one-sixth (240,000 in 1900) of the work force, although the growth rate of these groups was quite high and had picked up momentum in the 1890s.¹

A result of the concentration of production was that more and more industrial workers were employed at big factories. As in Britain and the USA, quite a few large factories (by the standards of those years) employing more than 1,000 workers each appeared on the European continent. According to statistics for the mid-1890s, a total of 430,000 workers were employed at such factories in Germany and 313,000 in France. The concentration level of the industrial proletariat was high in Russia, where almost three-fourths of the factory workers and miners were employed at enterprises with a personnel of 100 or more, and almost one-half at enterprises with 500 or more workers. In presenting these statistics, Lenin noted that "the largest factories in Russia are larger than those in Germany".² In 1903 Russia had 238 factories employing upwards of 1,000 workers each; these had an aggregate work force of 521,500,³ which comprised nearly one-third of the factory proletariat.

In this respect most of the continental European countries were far behind Britain and Russia.

Despite the growing concentration, the bulk of the workers in the manufacturing industry were still employed at small or medium factories. The number of these factories was particularly large in the clothes, underwear, footwear, furniture, and household utensils industries. But even in other industries many factories operated side by side with a network of small workshops supplying various semi-finished products, for example, castings. Besides, in factory industry itself there were many small semi-artisan enterprises.

In Eastern Europe the worker concentration level was particularly high in the Kingdom of Poland and Bohemia. However, in most of the East European countries, particularly in the Balkans, the bulk of the proletariat comprised workers employed at small artisan or other primitive workshops.

In 1899, according to the factory census of that year, Japan had 104 factories with more than 500 workers each; these employed a total of 127,000 persons or one-third of the entire factory work force. Factories with more than 1,000 workers each also appeared there, and in 1900 these numbered 35.

¹ *A History of the Working Class of Russia, 1861-1900*, Moscow, 1972, p. 19; A. G. Rashin, *Formation of the Working Class of Russia. History and Economics*, Moscow, 1958, p. 25 (both in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 516.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 513.

Employment of female labour continued to expand in many countries, where intensive industrialisation was only at the initial stage. This labour was concentrated chiefly in the textile and sewing industries. In Germany, for example, male labour was predominant in 1882 in the production of textiles and clothes, but by 1907 the correlation had changed in favour of female labour. In France the number of women workers increased by 50 per cent between 1866 and 1901. Of the work force in Japan at the close of the 1890s 63 per cent were women. They were employed mainly on labour-intensive unskilled work. Moreover, everywhere, even in the capitalistically more developed countries, there was discrimination against women, who were paid from 33 to 50 per cent less than men for the same work.

Despite the restrictions that were gradually being enforced, child labour was still widespread. The restrictions concerned chiefly work at factories and mines, and hardly affected agriculture and the distributive industry, i.e., branches where the labour of children and juveniles continued to be used on a particularly large scale. But tens and hundreds of thousands of minors continued to be employed in industry, primarily at small enterprises. In 1880, the US manufacturing industry employed 182,000 children under the age of 16; they comprised 6.7 per cent of the total number of industrial workers. According to the 1895 census, in Germany there were 215,000 children under the age of 14 at industrial enterprises, including 38,000 at factories. In some countries there were virtually no restrictions on the employment of child labour, which was exploited on a scale and in forms reminiscent of the worst times of early capitalism in Britain. In Belgium, for instance, children and juveniles worked on a par with adult men—12-14 hours a day—even in coal mines. In Italy 40 per cent of the industrial workers were children, juveniles, and women.

Noteworthy changes were taking place in the composition of waged workers according to skills. Whereas the appearance of textile mills, with which the industrial revolution commenced, was accompanied by the ousting of the skilled manual labour of artisans and manufactory workers by simple machine labour, subsequently, when machine production spread to mechanical engineering and other metal-working industries, the need for higher skills was created by factory industry itself. There was a large proportion of skilled workers in the British mechanical engineering (up to 70-75 per cent) and shipbuilding (up to 50-60 per cent) industries. In the USA skilled and semi-skilled workers comprised nearly two-thirds of the industrial proletariat. In Germany, according to the 1895 census, 56 per cent of the work force in industry, crafts, and building were trained workers. Most of the skilled workers were concentrated in crafts, building, and other new branches of factory production; however,

especially if agriculture is taken into account, they were still a small minority in the total number of proletarians.

The category of skilled workers embraced various qualification levels; the highest qualifications in the last 30 years of the nineteenth century were still mainly of the artisan and semi-artisan type linked to experience of skilled manual labour acquired by long years of apprenticeship and independent work. Little wonder that in analysing the composition of the work force at British cotton mills, Marx spoke of workers "brought up to a trade", such as mechanics, joiners, and so on. But in the textile industry of those years skilled workers of this type comprised a very small segment and were, to quote Marx, "distinct from the factory operative class" (their occupation was mainly to look after and repair the machinery).¹ But in the new branches of factory production they were among the basic production personnel. In the mechanical engineering and analogous factories rudiments of manufactory-artisan production lasted longer and the ousting of skilled manual labour by simple machines was slower. However, these factories used skilled machine labour on a larger scale. A lathe operator, for instance, had to be trained—he had to have an understanding of blueprints and an ability to make elementary computations, and was required to have at least some knowledge of geometry. New demands on labour were made also by the newest industries such as electrical engineering and automotive. The corresponding groups of proletarians were still small (in 1899 there were only 2,000 automotive workers in the USA), but their numerical growth was much faster. In Germany the 1882 census did not identify electricians as a separate professional group; in 1907 their number reached 90,000.² The first industrial laboratories appeared, and invention was becoming one of the functions and varieties of wage labour directly exploited by capital.

Persons employed at offices, in the distributive industry, and technical services had a higher skill and education level than the bulk of the industrial workers. It was precisely in the last decades of the nineteenth century, due to the increasing concentration of production, scientific and technological progress, and the expansion of the distributive industry, that these professional groups became massive in the true sense of the word. In Germany, for instance, the total number of white-collar workers increased fourfold (up to 1,300,000) in 1882-1907: sevenfold in industry as a whole, and even 13-fold in

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 396; Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Works*, 2nd Russ. ed., Vol. 47, pp. 481, 507.

² N. Neuhaus, *Die berufliche und soziale Gliederung des deutschen Volkes*, München-Gladbach, 1911, S. 37.

mechanical engineering. "In all spheres of people's labour," Lenin wrote in 1899, "capitalism increases the number of *office and professional workers* with particular rapidity and makes a growing demand for intellectuals."¹

White-collar workers had attracted the attention of Marx and Engels as a professional category. In considering the circulation of capital, Marx analysed the functions of office and distributive workers, whom he called "commercial employees", and showed how their labour was exploited by capital. He noted that "a commercial employee is a wage-worker like any other,"² making the important reservation that the "commercial worker, in the strict sense of the term, belongs to the better-paid class of wage-workers—to those whose labour is classed as skilled and stands above average labour."³

Touching upon this question later, Engels spoke of a "commercial proletariat". He also drew attention to the fact that the business of joint-stock companies (which were becoming widespread at the time) was "being conducted by *hired persons*—employees, whose condition is in effect similar to that of the privileged, better-paid workers."⁴ He coined the expression "intellectual proletariat" (*das intellektuelle Proletariat*) in his message to the International Congress of Socialist Students.⁵ It must be borne in mind, of course, that in those years even rank and file white-collar workers could count on more durable employment, much higher remuneration, and more privileges than workers by hand.

WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS

The wageworker spent almost his whole life at work or on looking for a job. From his early years to the last days of his life he was chained to hard, monotonous, and exhausting labour. The character and conditions of work determined his way and rhythm of life and his level and type of consumption—everything that drew a sharp line between the proletariat and other social classes.

The forms and methods of capitalist exploitation varied, depending on the character of production. In terms of organisation and technology industry presented a fairly motley picture: alongside large enterprises with steam-driven and, from the 1890s onwards, electricity-powered machines, there were still small factories using

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Review. Karl Kautsky. *Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm. Eine Antikritik*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 202.

² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 292.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁴ Friedrich Engels, "Notwendige und überflüssige Gesellschaftsklassen", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1962, S. 288.

⁵ Friedrich Engels, "An den Internationalen Kongress sozialistischer Studenten", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 415.

water power, and also a huge number of primitive and artisan workshops using nothing but manual labour. The development of large-scale capitalist machine industry was accompanied by changes in the correlation of the basic methods of exploitation linked to the extraction of absolute and relative surplus value. While in the first half of the nineteenth century (and even later in some countries) a higher level of exploitation was achieved mainly by lengthening the working day (absolute surplus value), the significance of labour intensification (relative surplus value) grew markedly in subsequent years. For example, at the close of the nineteenth century the British spinner operated two or three times as many machines as his father; the speed of spinning machines (in Lancashire) increased by some 40 per cent from the early 1870s to the early 1900s. Of course, this demanded more mobility, concentration, and stress on the part of the worker. Piece-work and a systematic reduction of rates were increasingly becoming a method of intensifying labour.

However, the potentialities for a further intensification of labour were held in check by the technical facilities of machine production, which, compared with the preceding period, underwent no fundamental changes up to the 1890s. This also applies to mechanical engineering, where the main machinery still consisted of the steam motor, suspended belt transmission, and the universal lathe, while small-batch output remained predominant. Among the workers in the British mechanical engineering industry in 1886 only some 6-7 per cent were on a piece-rate (one of the reasons being that its introduction was strongly opposed by the workers). By 1906 the number of piece-rate workers had risen to 33 per cent.

In this respect the last 30 years of the nineteenth century was a sort of transition period: the switch from extensive to intensive production was imminent but had not taken place. As distinct from the preceding years, this period saw a slowing down of the general growth of labour productivity in the leading capitalist countries (the peak had been reached in the 1870s).¹ The potentialities of steam technology, of the universal lathe were gradually exhausted, thereby preparing the conditions for qualitative changes, for a transition to new methods of intensifying labour and production based on the technology of standardised mass production and on a further specialisation and "scientific" organisation of labour.

Working conditions remained wretched in all respects. Until the mid-1870s the working day at almost all factories was at least 10 hours, while in some countries it was 12 hours and even much longer. The working day was, in most cases, 10 hours long in Britain

¹ Jürgen Kuczynski, *Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter unter dem Kapitalismus*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1967; E. H. Phelps, Brown, *The Economics of Labour*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1962, p. 231.

and the USA, from 10 to 12 hours in Germany, from 11 to 12 hours in France and Italy, 12 hours in the Netherlands, 12-13 hours in Spain, 13-14 hours in Belgium (textile industry), 12-15 hours in Russia, and 12-16 hours in Japan. For many categories of working people the working day exceeded the length being established at factories. For instance, prior to 1893 the British railwaymen worked 12 or more hours a day, sometimes as long as 20 hours; distributive industry workers, including juveniles, had a working week of between 75 and 90 hours. In the USA one fourth of the work force had a working day of 11-13 hours, while salesmen worked 12 hours a day. Everywhere the working day was even longer in small-scale and cottage industries.

Disregard of safety engineering by employers placed the health and life of workers in danger. Every year thousands died in industrial accidents and tens of thousands were crippled. The accident rate was horrifying in the mining and metallurgical industries and on the railways.

The long working day, the absence of safety regulations (despite the development of new types of production involving increased risks to life and health), the crowded workrooms, and the dirt made labour a curse for the workers. Working conditions were particularly deplorable, in fact murderous, at the mines and in the metallurgical and chemical factories.

Outside the factories, mines, and building sites the workers faced constant need and misery. Back-breaking labour, undernourishment, and disease undermined their physical strength and depressed them morally. The working masses had practically no access to the cultural values accumulated by humankind. Under these conditions family ties were easily weakened: workers looked for association and relaxation outside the family, usually in the streets and in pubs.

The development of the working class depended on its ability to resist capitalist exploitation, to fight for an improvement of living and working conditions (which, in turn, led to changes in the methods of production and exploitation). It was, therefore, of especial importance that precisely during this period it managed in some countries to consolidate and extend and in others to win the first-ever basic trade union rights and freedoms. Even in Britain, where freedom of association and strikes was formally recognised earlier than anywhere else, the trade unions had, until the 1870s, no juridical rights and the legality of their existence was questioned time and again. Strike leaders and participants were tried and imprisoned on charges of "conspiracy", "violence", "obstruction" of enterprise, and so on. It was only in 1871 that the British trade unions won juridical recognition and, consequently, the right to protect their property and funds. But, at the same time, the British parliament passed a cunning act

under which practically any action by strikers (for instance, agitation in favour of a strike, and picketing) was a felony. In 1875 the trade unions secured the repeal of this act. In the same year the parliament repealed the worker-hated Master and Servant Act.¹ The Employers and Workmen Act, that replaced it, legislatively recognised the juridical equality of both parties to a contract on the hire of labour. The principle of collective bargaining was also legalised for the first time; despite strong resistance from employers it won increasing recognition.

It took years for the working class of other capitalist countries to achieve the corresponding level of trade union rights and freedoms. In the USA, for example, although the trade unions were not persecuted by the law as in the first half of the nineteenth century, they were in fact hamstrung by the arbitrary actions of the local authorities and the courts (trade union leaders were banned from calling for strikes and so on), and after 1890 by the Sherman Antitrust Act. In France legislation prohibiting organised action by the workers was repealed in the closing years of the Second Empire, but the French trade unions won legality only in 1884. In Germany there was no general legislation on this score. Freedom of association was recognised by the "trade rules" adopted by the North German Bund in 1869. But the laws operating in individual German states, in particular in Prussia and Saxony, permitted trade unions only in industry, and even then with major reservations and limitations, which were reinforced by constant police and judicial persecution. In Italy workers' mutual-aid associations were recognised as lawful only in 1886, and freedom of strikes was sanctioned only in 1889. The new criminal code that came into force in 1890 regarded as criminal not a strike as such but the use by strikers of "violence or threats", which, of course, left gaping loopholes for sending police and troops against strikers.²

As constitutional-parliamentary regimes (which in some countries were only a cover for a semi-absolutist system) came to power, other civil rights and freedoms were formally extended to embrace wagedworkers. In France and Germany the proclamation of universal suffrage (for men) was closely linked to the Bonapartist intrigues of

¹ Under this act infringements of a labour contract by a worker were punished with imprisonment, while employers who broke the contract were only liable to pay damages by order of a court. In the period from 1858 to 1875 it was invoked by British courts to start proceedings against some 10,000 workers annually (Daphne Simon, "Master and Servant", *Democracy and the Labour Movement. Essays in Honour of Dona Torr*, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., London, 1954, pp. 160-200).

² The ban on unions was lifted in 1867 in Belgium, in 1870 in Austria-Hungary, and in 1872 in the Netherlands.

the ruling circles, who counted on using it against the working class, which was then a minority group in these countries. The British bourgeoisie, on the contrary, refused to recognise this principle for a long time, and when it finally had to make concessions it dosed them out carefully without forgoing any of its own class interests. In 1884 (after a half-century-long struggle), the third parliamentary reform extended suffrage to most men workers. But there was no change in the intricate registration system, which continued to bar a sizable proportion of workers from participation in elections.

The opportunity to conduct political activity, including election campaigns, legally was of no little significance in giving the working class a stronger position in society and was one of the major weapons against the existing system. But until the beginning of the twentieth century not more than 10-15 per cent of the population took part in elections.¹ In some countries the electoral system, even after reforms were put into effect under pressure from below, was based on direct political discrimination against workers. In Russia, Japan, and many other countries the proletariat continued to be denied all political rights.

Factory legislation began to develop in the advanced capitalist countries under the impact of the working-class movement. Marx assessed this as the "first conscious and methodical reaction of society against the spontaneously developed form of the process of production".² Factory legislation made it possible to eliminate at least petty persecution and direct robbing of the workers, to which factory owners had frequently resorted at the dawn of industrial capitalism: to some extent this legislation was a barrier to the most inhuman forms of exploitation. Although it was put into effect slowly, the sphere of its operation gradually widened, embracing more industries and aspects of production. The principal West European countries took steps to protect the labour of women and children, prohibited wages in kind, and here and there established control over piece-rates. Mandatory hygiene and labour safety rules and other measures were introduced at factories. At the close of the nineteenth century some countries made accidents insurance by employers mandatory, and introduced state sickness insurance. These reforms were concessions wrested from the ruling classes. Each, to quote Marx, "has been wrung from them by 'pressure from without'".³ However, more often than not the factory laws remained a dead letter for the workers,

¹ In Germany—10 per cent at the first elections in 1871, and 15 per cent in 1907; in Britain—12 per cent in the same year. In the USA the percentage was somewhat higher at the time—19.

² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 451.

³ Marx to Henry Mayer Hyndman, December 8, 1880, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 314.

especially as the few factory inspectors could not effectively monitor the implementation of these laws.¹

From the standpoint of the proletariat's vital interests the steps to protect the labour of minors and women were of particularly great importance. These included the prohibition or regulation of night and underground work, the establishment of a minimum age for the children and juveniles employed at factories, and a limit on the working day for these categories of working people. Following Britain, where such restrictions were enforced earlier than anywhere else, the ruling circles of some other countries were compelled to take the same road. But the scale of the concessions to the working people was dissimilar, to say the least, in different countries, while the relevant legislation was extremely inconsistent, containing various reservations that left many loopholes for employers.

As a result of the working-class struggles, the tendency towards shortening the working day spread also to adult men workers. The most perceptible changes took place in this period in Britain. In the first half of the nineteenth century the workers in the British textile industry had a working week of 90-100 hours, but during the last 30 years of that century it was 56.5 hours, and 60 hours at other factories. In the British mechanical engineering and metalworking industries the workers won a 54-hour week, while at some factories the working week was shortened to 48 hours, and for London builders the working week was fixed (in 1892) at 49 hours. Some progress was made in this respect also in other capitalist countries, albeit by fits and starts and slowly. According to the Woytinskys, distinguished economists, between 1870 and 1910 the average working week in the USA was reduced from 66 to 54 hours, i.e., by 18.2 per cent; in Europe it fell from 78 to 60 hours, i.e., by 23 per cent.² On the basis of statistics for leading countries Jürgen Kuczynski estimates that the average working week in the capitalist world diminished from 74 hours in 1870-1879 to 61 hours in 1900-1909, i.e., by 18 per cent.³ These statistics concern only the basic industries, but even in these industries the working day was in fact longer on account of overtime, especially during periods of high economic activity.

The regulation and some shortening of the working day created the conditions for the spread of literacy, of education among factory workers. As a matter of fact, this was also required by production

¹ In the early 1900s there were in Britain 83 inspectors (and 22 assistant inspectors) for 95,700 factories and 137,600 workshops; in Prussia (1898) there were 193 inspectors (with assistants) for 137,300 factories; in France (1899) there were 95 inspectors for 309,700 factories.

² W. S. Woytinsky and E. S. Woytinsky, *World Population and Production. Trends and Outlook*, The Twentieth Century Fund, New York, 1953, p. 367.

³ Jürgen Kuczynski, op. cit.

itself. For that reason the laws concerning the labour of children and juveniles at factories usually contained the provision that these had to have a certain minimum school education. For their part, the trade unions and other democratic organisations vigorously pressed for a state-funded system of education. In the northern states of the USA (under pressure brought to bear by the local trade unions) such a system was introduced before the Civil War of 1861-1865. Britain began the transition to universal elementary education in 1870, and Italy in 1877; in France secular education for children was made compulsory in 1882. The shorter working day gave workers the opportunity for self-education, helping to extend their requirements, cultural interests and outlook, and invigorating their class activity.

The growth of the productive forces and the mounting resistance of the working class to capitalist exploitation affected the movement of wages. As regards cash wages, their average level from cycle to cycle either somewhat rose or fell to a lesser extent than the cost of living. In Britain and the USA there was a minor rise of the nominal wage (since the end of the 1870s); the rise was somewhat larger in France and Germany.

In that period the prices of farm produce and manufactured consumer goods showed a tendency to decrease. In Britain, which was still predominant in the world market, the period 1877-1900 saw the retail price of flour, potatoes, and sugar drop by 50 per cent and of bread and meat by 33 per cent. This was largely due to imports of cheap grain and other farm produce from the USA, Canada, and Russia. Prices fell also in West European continental countries, but this was less marked because it was obstructed by customs tariffs, instituted to protect the interests of the big landowners. For that reason, in France, for example, the cost of living decline was less tangible than in Britain; in Germany the cost of living remained practically unchanged.

Food was still the main expense item of the workingman's family budget—consuming from half to two-thirds of his earnings. For that reason the movement of food prices was the main factor affecting real wages. During the last 20 years of the nineteenth century real wages rose between 30 and 50 per cent in the leading Western countries (Britain, the USA, Germany, and France). In other words, capital failed to reduce the price of labour in accordance with the reduced cost of living, a target its very nature was prompting it to achieve. The upper hand was gained by the tendency towards raising the real price of labour.

For the proletariat, reduced to the brink of physical degradation by the industrial revolution, the certain rise of the living standard meant chiefly the possibility to eat somewhat better and have some variety in food, at least when employed. Without this certain improve-

ment in nourishment it would have been impossible to intensify labour in factory industry. The changing living and working conditions led to a growth of the workingman's family expenditures in other respects. The ever growing concentration of workers in the towns and in large-scale industry was accompanied by the development of new requirements and habits not only relative to food but also to clothes, housing, and cultural interests (reading newspapers, and so on). Rents grew and more money had to be spent on transport. Lastly, taxes were raised, especially on account of the enlargement of the state apparatus, the growth of militarism, and the mounting military and political rivalry between the powers.

The workingman's family continued to spend almost all its income on prime necessities—food, clothes, housing, heating, and lighting. Cultural requirements could in fact be satisfied only at the expense of these vital items of the family budget. At the same time, developments bore out Engels' words in reference to the Erfurt Programme of the German Social-Democratic Party, that the "organisation of the workers and their constantly growing resistance will possibly check the *increase of misery* to a certain extent".¹

The working people's living standard was not and could not be the same in different countries. Naturally, national distinctions in wages mirrored distinctions in labour productivity and cost of labour. In the early 1900s the nominal wage in the USA, Germany, and France (metalworking, mechanical engineering, and construction) compared as follows with that in Britain:

	Britain	USA	Germany	France
Weekly wage	100	232	83	75
Working time	100	96	111	117
Wage for equal working time	100	240	75	64

Source: Carl von Tyszka, *Die Lebenshaltung der arbeitenden Klassen in den bedeutenderen Industriestaaten: England, Deutschland, Frankreich, Belgien und Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika*, Verlag von Gustav Fischer, Jena, 1912, S. 11, 13.

From the angle of the difference in the length of working time (extensive magnitude of labour) the US workers earned almost two and a half times as much as British workers, while the latter's wages were approximately 25 per cent higher than those of German workers and 33 per cent higher than those of French workers. However, the

¹ Frederick Engels, "A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 431.

difference in real wages was smaller in the first and larger in the second and third cases. The American worker had to pay more for housing and also for clothes and other manufactured consumer goods (but food prices in the USA were lower than in Europe). In Germany housing cost more and was poorer than in Britain. Food was also dearer on the continent. A study of the budgets of workingmen's families conducted early in the twentieth century brought out the following correlations of these indicators (Britain = 100):

	USA	Germany	France
A. Housing	207	123	98
B. Consumer goods prices	125	108	106
A plus B (on the basis of family budgets)	141	111	104

Source: Carl von Tyszka, *op. cit.*, S. 66.

A simple calculation shows that from the angle of wage purchasing power and family budget patterns the real wage (hourly) in the USA was 70 per cent higher than in Britain, while in Germany and France it was 32 and 38 percent lower respectively. In the latter two countries it was consequently between 60 and 66.7 per cent lower than in the USA. Of course, we must take into account the differences in labour intensity and productivity; under these headings the US industry was far ahead of the European level. The distinctions in consumer volume and pattern were seen, for example, in the fact that the ration of the bulk of the American and a large proportion of the British workers contained meat, wheat bread, and vegetables, while the ration of the German workers consisted chiefly of rye bread and potatoes, with meat appearing on the table usually only once a week—on Sundays. There were certain distinctions also in typical housing. While in urban areas in Germany and many other countries of continental Europe the usual type of workers' housing was tenements, in the USA and Britain many workers lived in small cottages (for one or two families) usually owned by the factories, that leased them to the workers. The capitalists saw this as a means of tying workers to their factories.

During the closing decades of the nineteenth century insecurity strongly and painfully affected the living conditions of the workers. Even in "good" years, i.e., during periods of high economic activity, unemployment ran at a rate of 3-5 per cent. A section of the factory workers was constantly afflicted by seasonal unemployment, which assumed particularly large proportions in the winter months. In

Germany, for example, the year 1895 (when there was an economic upswing) saw 179,000 registered unemployed in mid-June and 553,600 in early December.

But periods of economic crises and slumps, extremely protracted and painful during these decades, were disastrous. A crisis meant the sudden unemployment for hundreds of thousands and even millions of working people. Those who had no savings (and these were in the majority) found themselves with no means of subsistence at once and often for a long time. They were reduced to indescribable hardship: they starved in the true sense of the word, were evicted from houses, compelled to beg, pawn whatever they had, accept the humiliating handouts of charities, or resort to crime for the sake of a crust of bread.

The unemployment rate was the highest in the basic industries. In Britain, for example, it reached 20 or even 33 per cent of the total number of employed in some trades. Workers of small, semi-artisan workshops were the hardest hit by crises. Among skilled factory workers unemployment was evidently somewhat below the average level. Crises seriously affected not only industrial workers but also other groups of wage earners, including employees of the distributive industry. Within the framework of general insecurity, the condition of some segments of the proletariat was particularly grave, for example, of farm labourers, who eked out a pitiful existence (in some countries—Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia among others—they were still fettered by some forms of pre-capitalist dependence). Also in this category were unskilled factory workers, who lived in dire want, and, of course, the mass of wageworkers of capitalist manufactories, the victims of, to quote Marx, the most infamous system of exploitation, namely, the cottage industry.

The practice of factory owners, wholesale dealers and middlemen buyers of handing out work to be done at home was still to be observed in Britain and became very widespread in the USA (in connection with the influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe eager to work for any, even the lowest wage) and also in Germany, France, Italy, and Russia.¹ In the face of growing competition from the large-scale machine industry, the cottage industry could exist only by accepting super-exploitation and an extremely low living standard. Little wonder that this was called a sweat system: there was the most primitive and the most exhausting exploitation, and, on top of everything, no possibility of any control and inspection. Moreover, in most countries the cottage industries remained outside the operation of factory legislation.

¹ Lenin estimated that in the artisan industry in Russia there were at least two million "capitalistically employed workers" ("The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 450).

The misery of the workers of cottage industries was compounded by the chronic irregularity of work. Periods of intensive, back-breaking work, particularly in branches where production was seasonal, alternated with long periods of unemployment lasting several months. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the working conditions underwent practically no change: the same crowded, stuffy premises, in which people usually worked and lived; the same unsanitary conditions that turned workshops into hotbeds of infection and occupational diseases; the same unbearably long working day of 14-15 or more hours; the same predatory wage rates that did not allow meeting even the most wretched subsistence minimum. In the early 1890s a Select Committee of the House of Lords investigated the conditions of the cottage industries in Britain and stated in its report that the chain and mail workers in the Black Country, the trouser and "juvenile suit" hands in East London, the garret cabinetmakers of Bethnal Green, the cottage bootmakers of the Leicestershire villages, and more noteworthy even than these, the skilled outworking cutlers of Sheffield suffered to an extent that could "hardly be exaggerated", from "earnings barely sufficient to sustain existence, hours of labour such as to make the lives of the workers periods of almost ceaseless toil, hard and unlovely to the last degree; sanitary conditions injurious to the health of the persons employed and dangerous to the public".¹

In Germany, where cottage industries, particularly in the villages, were extremely widespread, especially spinning and weaving, the artisans worked, as in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, practically from sunrise to sunset, often 16-18 hours a day. Their diet consisted mainly of potatoes. As to the length of the working day, the wage level, and sanitary conditions, the artisans were worse off than factory workers, and each crisis brought them starvation much earlier than to factory workers.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century the condition of the working class was characterised also by a further aggravation of the housing problem on account of the rapid growth of new industrial regions and centres,² the migration of people to the big towns, and

¹ Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, Vol. Two, Longmans, Green, & Co., London, 1897, p. 543.

² In 1871-1901 the urban population increment percentage was: from 57 to 77 in Britain; from 36.1 to 54.3 in Germany; from 30.5 in 1866 to 39.1 in 1896 in France; and from 25.7 to 39.7 in the USA. Europe had 70 cities with a population of over 100,000 each in 1870, but by 1895 their number had risen to 120. Urban development proceeded very rapidly in the USA: between 1860 and 1900 the population of Chicago increased from 109,000 to 1,698,000, of Brooklyn from 279,000 to 1,166,000, of Philadelphia from 565,000 to 1,293,000, and so on.

the rising rents. The deplorable housing of the workers was aggravated by the circumstance that this was precisely the period when large towns, particularly capitals, were being replanned and redeveloped on a fairly large scale, affecting chiefly working-class districts.

Workingmen's families usually lived in tiny, crowded quarters that had nothing approaching sanitary facilities. In Berlin, according to the 1890 census, half of the workers' tenements had only one room with heating; in Hamburg the proportion was 39 per cent, in Dresden 55 per cent, and in Chemnitz 70 per cent. Usually, an entire family (four or five persons) lived in such a room, and sometimes a corner was rented to an unmarried worker. Tens of thousands of workingmen's families had no permanent home at all, living instead in barns, abandoned railway carriages, and so on. In Vienna most of the workers' tenements likewise consisted of one-room flats, into which from five to 10 persons were crowded. In the workers' districts of Vienna the death rate was three times higher than in the bourgeois residential districts. The population in workers' dwellings in the Czech lands, even according to the official statistics released by city authorities, was in most of the industrial regions double the permissible level. One bed was often shared by several persons, and many had no beds and had to sleep on straw beddings laid out on the floor.¹

The slum areas, especially in old towns, were constant breeding grounds of poverty and despair. In the mid-1890s Engels described the East End of London as a "continually spreading mire of insoluble poverty and desperation, of hunger in periods of unemployment, and physical and moral degradation when jobs are to be had".²

Huge slum areas appeared also in large American cities, for instance, in New York, Chicago, Boston, and Cincinnati. An official report on the workers' tenement areas in Chicago in the 1880s speaks of the "wretched condition of the tenements into which thousands of workingmen are huddled, the wholesale violation of all rules for drainage, plumbing, light, ventilation and safety in case of fire or accident, the neglect of all laws of health, the horrible condition of sewers and outhouses, the filthy dingy rooms into which they are crowded, the unwholesome character of their food and the equally

¹ Herbert Steiner, *Die Arbeiterbewegung Österreichs 1867-1889, Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte von der Gründung des Wiener Arbeiterbildungsvereines bis zum Einigungsparteitag in Hainfeld*, Europa-Verlag, Wien, 1964, S. 166.

² Friedrich Engels, "England 1845 und 1885", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 21, S. 195

filthy nature of the neighboring streets, alleys and back lots filled with decaying matter and stagnant pools".¹

In Britain, an inquiry conducted in the 1890s placed at least 30 per cent of the population and at least two-fifths of the working class in the poverty-stricken category. Workers of this category, especially the aged, were in most cases sooner or later reduced to pauperism. At least five million people constantly lacked elementary means of subsistence, and of these some two million annually received charity on the basis of the Poor Law. In the USA contemporary estimates indicate that up to four million people lived on public charity. About 25 per cent of the population of New York, Chicago, and other large American cities constantly lived below the poverty line.

Nowhere were social contrasts so striking as in Britain and the USA. And perhaps nowhere were the distinctions so glaring between the condition of the lower strata of the proletariat and the best-paid workers.

THE LABOUR ARISTOCRACY

The formation and growth of a labour aristocracy constitute one of the most characteristic features of the internal structural evolution of the working class in the leading capitalist countries in the period we are examining. Earlier than anywhere else, and in classical form, it took shape in Britain, where the term "labour aristocracy" gained currency in approximately the middle of the nineteenth century.

In the preface to the second German edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1892) Engels wrote of two relatively privileged categories of the British working class. The first consisted of factory workers and the second of the large trade unions, in other words, of organised workers in industries where adult male labour predominated. "The engineers, the carpenters and joiners, the bricklayers," he wrote, "are each of them a power, to that extent that, as in the case of the bricklayers and bricklayers' labourers, they can even successfully resist the introduction of machinery. That their condition has remarkably improved since 1848 there can be no doubt, and the best proof of this is in the fact that for more than fifteen years not only have their employers been with them, but they with their employers, upon exceedingly good terms. They form an aristocracy among the working class; they have succeeded in enforcing for them-

¹ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II, *From the Founding of the American Federation of Labor to the Emergence of American Imperialism*, International Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 23.

selves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final."¹

Compared with the mass of proletarians, skilled factory workers had higher wages, which mirrored, among other things, the distinction between the cost of skilled and unskilled labour. In British industry the distribution of basic wage rates in 1886 was as follows (in %):

Weekly rate (shillings)	Men	Women
Up to 10	0.2	26.0
10 - 15	2.5	50.0
15 - 20	20.9	18.5
20 - 25	35.4	5.4
25 - 30	23.6	0.1
30 - 35	11.2	-
35 - 40	4.4	-
Over 40	1.8	-

Source: *British Labour Statistics. Historical Abstract, 1886-1968*, pp. 92, 93.

The statistics for individual industries indicate that workers in the leading branches of factory industry were in the best-paid categories. For example, in the textile industry spinners and carding machine operatives (men) earned between 35 and 37 shillings per week. In the mechanical engineering and shipbuilding industries most of the men workers (from 50 to 70 per cent) earned some 25 shillings a week, while a large proportion (10 to 20 per cent) earned 35 shillings a week. The weekly rate of fitters and lathe operatives was between 32 and 38 shillings, depending on the locality. The wage level in the leading branches of factory industry was determined chiefly by the advantages of large-scale production generally, while in the case of Britain—by its commercial and industrial power. In England, more than anywhere else, Engels wrote, the working class "has been sharing in the benefits of the huge growth of large-scale industry, and with England dominating the world market, this could not have been otherwise".²

But the benefits of large-scale production were distributed very disproportionately between the various groups of workers. In that selfsame year of 1886 women employed in the textile industry had a weekly wage averaging between 10 and 15 shillings; in other indus-

¹ Frederick Engels, "Preface to *The Condition of the Working Class in England*", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 448.

² Friedrich Engels, "Die englischen Wahlen", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1969, S. 496.

tries, particularly the manufacturing industry, most of the women workers were paid less than 10 shillings a week. The weekly rate of nearly 25 per cent of the men employed in industry did not exceed 20 shillings, in other words, it was below the subsistence level. Within individual industries the discrepancy between the highest and lowest wages was two- to fourfold.¹ At some factories it could be even wider. For instance, skilled steelworkers earned five times more than the assistants working side by side with them.

The relatively privileged status of the "upper segments" of the proletariat was seen not only in the size but also in the greater stability of their wages. By this time there were in Britain large and quite strongly organised trade unions. In the event of loss of employment their members could count on trade union allowances that allowed them to tide over difficult times and turn down lower-paid jobs. The large trade unions paid their members allowances also in other cases, for instance, during strikes sanctioned by the trade union leadership. The conditions prevailing under capitalism compelled even the most skilled and best-paid workers to fight for their vital interests. But in the 1870s-1880s the leaders of the "old" trade unions less and less frequently had recourse to an active means of struggle such as strikes, fearing for their union funds, which they sought to increase (for instance, they placed them in capitalist circulation, investing in stocks and other securities), and preferred to use them for insurance and mutual assistance.² In addition, many skilled workers were members of so-called friendly societies (which were voluntary insurance organisations in the proper sense of the word) and of consumer and building cooperatives.

The large trade unions were oriented on highly skilled workers. They had high entrance and membership dues (up to a shilling a week), closing their doors to untrained and unskilled workers. Their leaders, who adopted the bourgeois world outlook, believed that the purpose of trade unions was mainly to influence the labour market, to ensure the best possible conditions for the sale of skilled labour by limiting the number of apprentices at factories, regulating the length of the working day and other working conditions for "their" profession by contracts or legislation, closing a number of trades to women, making various kinds of jobs the domain of the members of

¹ E. J. Hobsbawm, "The Labour Aristocracy in 19th Century Britain", *Democracy and the Labour Movement. Essays in Honour of Dona Torr*, pp. 201-39.

² At the close of the nineteenth century the funds of 100 of the largest trade unions reached £2,700,000. Their revenues in 1898 alone amounted to £1,900,000 and their expenses to £1,500,000. It is indicative that of the total expenditures of the trade unions for 1892-1904 (£20,800,000), 23.5 per cent went for allowances for unemployed members, 35.6 per cent for other allowances (sickness, disability, old age), and only 17 per cent for allowances linked to strikes or lockouts.

"their" union, and facilitating emigration. In the trade unions they fostered the spirit of exclusiveness, of guild narrowness. While showing solidarity among themselves, the trade unionists fenced themselves off from the rest of the working class.

The British labour aristocracy identified itself socially with craftsmen and small shopkeepers, with what is usually termed as the "lower middle class". In order to acquire an aura of respectability, they imitated the latter's life-style, clothes, and code of behaviour. Many workers of this circle had their own houses in relatively modern neighbourhoods. In terms of living standard and world outlook many hardly differed from the petty bourgeoisie.

While it did not stake out a boundary between itself and the "middle class", the labour aristocracy attached significance to maintaining a social distance from the proletarian "lower orders"—unskilled, untrained workers—whom they treated with disdain and even despised. To a large extent this was due to the peculiarities of factory production, in which there was a fairly well-defined distinction between its various participants. The most highly skilled workers held a special status in the production hierarchy and could count on better treatment from the foremen. Some industries retained the practice of these workers hiring assistants and paying their wages (at the expense of the owner) or giving part of the work to subcontractors. The foremen had the authority to hire and dismiss workers, to turn jobs over to contractors, and so on. The upper crust which, on the whole, comprised a more cultured segment of its class, produced overseers, managers, and clerical workers, with the first elements of a labour bureaucracy as a spin-off. Some became entrepreneurs, opening their own businesses. Although this possibility steadily diminished, many skilled workers looked precisely to it with the hope of bettering their class status, i.e., becoming members of the "middle class".

The testimony of a distinguished personality of the British working-class movement, Tom Mann, gives an insight into the spiritual world of these workers.

In the 1880s he was a lathe mechanic at various mechanical engineering factories in London. The workers, he wrote about one of these factories, had no interests outside their work: "...There seemed to be nothing to talk about at meal times or on any odd occasion but work, Government orders, and who had them, patents, just launched or expected, prospects of greater trade for engineers, the mechanical progress of the world as it affected engineers. No talk here of social problems, but every man was in the A.S.E. and seemed to me to possess ability of the highest grade."¹ The skilled workers did all

¹ *Tom Mann's Memoirs*, The Labour Publishing Company Limited, London, 1923, p. 30.

they could to improve their skills, to obtain more technical knowledge, seeing this as the way to higher wages. Some, Mann says, took an interest in science and art and attended courses. However, the generally high cultural level of these workers combined with conservatism in social questions. When in his branch of the Amalgamated Engineers Mann said that the time had come to secure an eight-hour working day, instead of the nine that generally prevailed, only five of the 70-80 persons at the meeting voted in favour. No one was in principle opposed, but it was declared that "the time was not ripe".¹

In the USA, too, there was a considerable growth of the labour aristocracy, due especially to the "exceptional position of the native workers".² American-born workers had a sort of monopoly in skilled trades and the greatest chance of getting the highest pay and becoming overseers, and so on.

The successive waves of immigration rolling to American shores widened the gulf between the organised labour aristocracy and the rest of the working people. In the period 1889-1910 the proportion of skilled workers among immigrants did not average above 20 per cent. The shop unions of the labour aristocracy simply ignored the immigrants; in addition to keeping them out of their ranks, they frequently acted against any improvement of the condition of other workers, seeing this as a threat to themselves. In 1886 the editor of a trade union journal expressed widespread opinion when he wrote that the "mechanic and unskilled laborers have no interests in common, and whatever is gained by unskilled labor is at the expense of skilled labor".³ For his part the unskilled worker often regarded the skilled worker as an exploiter.

What characterised the evolution of the labour aristocracy during the transition from pre-monopoly to monopoly capitalism? There were two objective tendencies in that period: its numerical growth and the fact that it comprised an ever-larger part of the working class, and also the widening gap between its wage level and that of the bulk of the workers. These tendencies had a common cause—the demand for skilled workers in large-scale machine production, especially in its new, rapidly growing branches. In the absence of a public system of training skilled workers and with the relatively low education level of the population, the situation in the labour market favoured the skilled over the unskilled worker. There was an abundance of unskilled labour, more than the demand for it.

¹ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

² Engels to Hermann Schlüter, March 30, 1892, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 419.

³ I. Yellowitz, *The Position of the Worker in American Society, 1865-1896*, Englewood Cliffs, 1969, p. 92.

The closing decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century saw a particularly intensive numerical growth of the labour aristocracy in the leading capitalist countries (in the USA and Germany it reached its peak somewhat later than in Britain). The widening gulf separating it from the main mass of the proletariat is shown, in particular, by British statistics, which tell us that in 1886-1906 the "dispersion" of earnings in British industry (the difference between higher and lower earnings) increased, and only subsequently began to diminish.¹ In the USA this was seen in even bolder relief. In 1870 skilled workers earned roughly two-thirds more than unskilled labourers, in 1907 this difference rose to 100 per cent and continued to increase until 1915 (following which the reverse tendency was observed). In Germany a growing gap between the earnings of skilled and unskilled workers was noted in the 1870s and 1880s. During the next two decades it remained stable, but began to diminish with the outbreak of the First World War. The picture was approximately the same in France. On the whole, in the countries we have named the difference in the wage levels of skilled and unskilled workers either grew or remained unchanged in the period from the end of the nineteenth century to the outbreak of the First World War. While this is true of skilled workers as a whole (there was considerable differentiation even among them), there are more grounds for speaking of a growing "breakaway" of unionised workers, whose wages were more stable or rose faster than those of unorganised workers.

Linked to the conditions and character of production and to the situation in the labour market, these objective processes were used by capital to sow discord among the working class. They served as the foundation of bourgeois social policy (which was strikingly seen subsequently). Indirect evidence of the growing social influence of the working class, this policy also sprang from the striving to enlist the class collaboration of the labour aristocracy and thereby undermine the class struggle. The extent this policy proved successful depended on the obtaining conditions (socio-economic, historical, and political), and these shaped out differently in different countries.

The profits from the exploitation of colonies and from foreign trade gave big capital larger possibilities when it had to make concessions to the upper crust of the workers, whether in wages or other questions, linked to the enforcement of social reforms. Institutional forms of settling conflicts and arbitration (conciliation, courts of arbitration, and so forth), encouraged or deliberately implanted by bourgeois legislation, began to take shape in the relations between labour and capital. Earlier than others, the British bourgeoisie had

¹ *British Labour Statistics. Historical Abstract, 1886-1968*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1971, p. 156.

to recognise the strength of the trade unions and have recourse to conciliation, although it did attempt to reverse developments: it was opposed by the proletariat, which by then comprised the majority of the population. Later, mainly in the period from the closing years of the nineteenth to the early years of the twentieth century, these tactics were frequently employed by entrepreneurs in other leading capitalist countries. The fact that big capital had changed its tactics found a response among conciliatory trade union leaders.

Since the boundaries of the labour aristocracy cannot be defined exactly it is hard to determine with any certainty its actual proportion in the working class. The well-known Marxist historian F. A. Rothstein believes that at the close of the nineteenth century it comprised from one-sixth to one-fourth of the British proletariat.¹ The progressive British sociologist E. J. Hobsbawm estimates that in that period the labour aristocracy in Britain comprised a maximum of 10-15 per cent of the working class.² The Soviet scholar B. N. Mikhalevsky believes that in Germany it amounted to some 9 per cent of the proletariat in 1907-1908.³

These are approximate estimates and they give a rough idea of the size of the workers' upper crust, to which a segment of the distributive industry and clerical workers gravitated and which exercised a certain influence on larger sections of the working class. Of course, even this section was not entirely homogeneous, either socially or ideologically and politically. It produced many militant labour leaders. Moreover, the magnitude, influence, and character of the labour aristocracy differed from country to country. Where industrial capitalism lagged behind in development, where intensive industrialisation was only beginning, and where by virtue of concrete historical conditions the labour organisations were of a different type than in Britain or the USA—there the labour aristocracy was numerically smaller and weaker, and skilled workers were in many cases part and parcel of the revolutionary working-class movement.

In France, for instance, in the period we are considering, skilled and better-paid workers belonged to the militant core of the trade unions. However, a Russian emigre worker living in France found it striking that there the skilled worker "preferred to settle his conflicts with the owner or foreman individually. These collisions were most often settled by the former proudly going to work in some other factory or workshop".⁴

¹ F. A. Rothstein, *Essays on the History of the Labour Movement in Britain*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925, p. 279 (Russian translation).

² E. J. Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-15, 216-21.

³ B. N. Mikhalevsky, "The Labour Aristocracy in Germany on the Eve of the First World War", *Voprosy istorii*, 1955, No. 1, pp. 107, 108.

⁴ A. S. Shapovalov, *In the Struggle for Socialism. Memoirs of a Veteran Bolshevik Underground Worker*, Moscow, 1934, p. 724 (in Russian).

Internal changes occurred in the labour aristocracy throughout the final decades of the nineteenth century. Skilled (male) workers of the textile industry were historically the first large contingent of the factory labour aristocracy. But the centre shifted gradually to the mechanical engineering and metalworking industries (mechanics, fitters, lathe operatives). Elements of the labour aristocracy appeared also in the metallurgical industry (blacksmiths, rolling-mill operatives), and the railways (engineers, conductors). Outside the factory industry strong positions were held by the labour aristocracy in the building trades (stonemasons, carpenters, cabinet-makers) and in some semi-artisan industries (type-setters, watchmakers, and others).

Factory production was conducive to the formation of a labour aristocracy to the extent that the use of machine was still dependent on skilled manual labour. With the sophistication of machine production, the spread of mechanisation, and an increasing division of labour less and less room remained for artisan-type workers. Mass production (initiated in the early years of the twentieth century) inaugurated changes in labour organisation and in the composition of the work force, which inevitably eroded the labour aristocracy. The segment of the best-paid skilled workers continued to grow, but the gap between them and lower-paid workers began to narrow because of the mounting importance of semi-skilled (specialised) workers, the sharp reduction of unskilled labour, the drawing up of the wages of the lower section to the average level, and so on.

These processes unfolded in full during and, especially, after the First World War.

THE WORKING CLASS IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

The intensity and concrete historical form of the basic tendencies and regularities of the development of the working class differed from country to country. A survey of the specifics of its formation, condition, structure, and mentality in individual countries, at least in the largest, adds some touches to the general picture given above.

USA. The American proletariat formed under conditions of a constant inflow of immigrants, which increased markedly in the period under review.¹ The "geography" of immigration widened and more and more people arrived from Eastern and Southern Europe, chiefly from Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia. Immigration divided workers into two large groups—local and immigrants, and the latter were divided into ethnic subgroups. All this determined

¹ The USA received 15 million immigrants between 1871 and 1904. The impact of this factor on the American proletariat is discussed in A. N. Shlepa-kov, *Immigration and the American Working Class in the Epoch of Imperialism*, Moscow, 1966 (in Russian).

the motley ethnical composition of the proletariat. The dissimilarity of the actual condition of the different ethnic elements was seen in the character of their distribution in the basic branches of the economy (in %).

	White			Non-White		
	Ame- rican- born	First- gene- ration Ameri- cans	Immi- grants	Black Ameri- cans	Indi- ans	Chi- nese and Japa- nese
Industry	39.8	28.4	30.6	3.9	0.1	0.2
Agriculture	57.8	10.6	10.4	20.6	0.4	0.2
Commerce and transport	50.4	25.7	19.2	4.4	—	0.3
Liberal professions	64.1	20.6	11.4	3.7	0.1	0.1
In private service	33.0	16.4	25.7	23.6	0.2	0.1
<i>Total</i>	47.7	18.3	19.7	13.7	0.2	0.4

Source: *Census Reports*, Vol. II, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900. Population*, Part II, United States Census Office, Washington, 1902.

The figures under the heading "industry" roughly mirror the ethnic composition of the industrial working class. As the table shows, the proportion of immigrants and first-generation white Americans was much larger in industry than in the total gainfully-employed population (the difference ratio was +1.55), while the proportion of native Americans was, on the contrary, much smaller. The proletariat was thus predominantly "immigrant", while most of the farmers and owners of commercial and other enterprises were native Americans. The debased status of the immigrants becomes even more striking if we consider statistics for individual industries. An inquiry conducted in the early years of this century showed that they comprised 68.7 per cent of the workers in the textile industry, 61.9 per cent in the coal industry, and 57.7 per cent in the metallurgical industry.¹ A "hierarchy" appeared also among the various ethnic groups: the most arduous, lowest-paid jobs were usually held by immigrants from Ireland and from Eastern and Southern Europe, the majority of whom had been peasants or artisans in their homelands.

The number of black workers began to grow after the Civil War and Reconstruction. Racial bias against the black population strongly affected the mass psychology of white workers. The American Marxist historian Philip S. Foner writes that from cradle to grave the white worker, born in America or elsewhere, was taught to regard the black as an inferior type. In a society, where racial prejudices were all but universal, it was hardly surprising that the white worker

¹ A. N. Shlepakov, op. cit., p. 48.

refused to work side by side with a black craftsman or labourer, believed that no black should receive the same wage and conditions, and excluded blacks from his union. To work with a black in the same shop, even travel with him on the same street car was to mean a loss of social status.¹

Wherever it could the American bourgeoisie skilfully set one ethnic group against another, and each of them against all the rest. To quote Engels, it cultivated "total indifference ... towards the human beings who succumb in the competitive struggle: 'there will be plenty more, and more than we want, of these damned Dutchmen, Irishmen, Italians, Jews and Hungarians'; and, to cap it all, John Chinaman stands in the background who far surpasses them all in his ability to live on next to nothing".²

Yet another factor that visibly influenced the condition and mentality of the American proletariat was the possibility of settling in the West (of the USA.—*Ed.*), where there was a constant shortage of labour and wages were for that reason much higher than the average in the nation and, more importantly, there was the opportunity (until the beginning of the 1890s) to get a piece of land and become a farmer. Even in this respect the native (white) Americans were better off than the immigrants; it was, of course, much harder for the latter to get land. The existence of unoccupied land had a dual influence on the American proletariat. On the one hand, it was one of the cardinal factors determining the generally higher wage level in the USA, and, on the other, made for high personnel fluidity in industry, prevented the proletariat from acquiring a class consciousness, and fostered individualism and "economism" in the thinking of the worker masses.

In this period American society had a relatively high level of so-called vertical mobility, which likewise contributed to the spread of individualism among the workers. "In large sections of the working class," writes Anthony Bimba, a historian of the American proletariat, "individualism still flourished. Many were convinced that a worker could become rich and escape from his class into the beautiful palace of the bourgeoisie. Such opportunities of escape were becoming scarcer and scarcer, the industrial proletarian army was becoming more and more stabilized. Nevertheless the psychology of individual advancement remained among the workers."³

¹ Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker. 1619-1973*, New York-Washington, 1974, p. 10.

² Engels to Hermann Schlüter, March 30, 1892, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 420.

³ Anthony Bimba, *The History of the American Working Class*, International Publishers, New York, 1934, p. 192.

Relative to the psychology of the American proletariat, Engels wrote in 1892, it was "wholly natural how firmly rooted bourgeois prejudices are even in the working class in such a young country, which has never known feudalism and has grown up on a bourgeois basis from the beginning. Out of his very opposition to the mother country—which still wears its feudal disguise—the American worker, too, imagines that the traditional bourgeois regime he inherited is something progressive and superior by nature and for all time, a *ne plus ultra*".¹

On the whole, in the face of the extraordinarily insolent and aggressive bourgeoisie and, besides, in comparison with the leading West European countries, the social position of the American proletariat was relatively weak. Until the beginning of the twentieth century factory legislation remained undeveloped and was not applied on a nation-wide scale, while in states where individual relevant laws were enacted they were not enforced. The forms of exploiting and deceiving the workers and the methods of dealing summarily with them were reminiscent of the period of early industrial capitalism in Britain.

Britain. The British working class was influenced by Britain's special position as a country which, as early as the mid-nineteenth century, had two attributes of imperialism: a huge colonial empire and a monopoly standing in the world market. The first British colony was Ireland; during the industrial revolution it became an additional source of labour, of extra-cheap labour at that, for the British industry. The poverty-stricken Irish worker was a competitor of the English worker, "a competitor upon the lowest plane possible in a civilised country, who for this very reason requires less wages than any other".² This gave rise to mutual antagonism which, to use Marx's words, divided the country's working class into two hostile camps. In 1870 Marx wrote that "in all the big industrial centres in England there is profound antagonism between the Irish proletariat and the English proletariat. The average English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and the *standard of life*. He feels national and religious antipathies for him. He regards him somewhat like the *poor whites* of the Southern States of North America regard their black slaves".³ Marx and Engels

¹ Engels to Friedrich Adolph Sorge, December 31, 1892, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 426.

² Frederick Engels, "The Condition of the Working-Class in England", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, p. 392.

³ Karl Marx, "Confidential Communication", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 176.

linked the main features of the British working class to the oppressed status of Ireland.

Throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century the expansionist policies of the British capitalists had a growing impact on the workers. Worship of "empire" was inculcated virtually from childhood. "Of letters," George Hardy, a distinguished personality of the British labour movement, recalls, "we were taught but little, but a great, great deal about the glory of the Empire on which the sun never sets."¹ Chauvinistic and social-imperialist sentiment was spread particularly by workers who returned home after working in other countries as foremen or even managers at factories built with the participation of British capital (in India, Egypt, and other countries). To Karl Kautsky's question about what the English workers thought about colonial policy, Engels replied: "the same as the bourgeois think."²

In a review (1899) of Hobson's *Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, Lenin drew attention to some features of British history and British life: "the high development of democracy, the absence of militarism, the enormous strength of the organised trade unions, the growing investment of English capital outside of England, which weakens the antagonism between the English employers and workers, etc."³ The colossal accumulations and huge superprofits from the exploitation of colonies, overseas investments, foreign trade, banking operations, and shipping helped capital to corrupt working people with small handouts and concessions (exemption of the poorest groups of the population from taxes, charity, donations to insurance funds, and so forth). The British capitalists were the first to have recourse to a system of profit-sharing (in the coal industry, at gas plants, and so forth) and to the circulation of small shares in order to inject a rentier psychology into the working class.

Given some of the benefits from Britain's trade and industrial superiority, many workers were inclined to link their condition and their direct interests to the preservation of British industry's position in the world market. This was to be observed among the workers of the Lancashire cotton industry which exported most of its products, and of mechanical engineering factories, which likewise exported much of their output.

Britain's age-long trade, industrial, and colonial monopoly affected the development of the working class in another respect. By the

¹ George Hardy, *Those Stormy Years. Memories of the Fight for Freedom on Five Continents*, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., London, 1956, p. 12.

² Engels to Karl Kautsky, September 12, 1882, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 330.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Review. J. A. Hobson. *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 102.

beginning of the twentieth century there was a slowing down of the growth of key industries, with the result that the segment of the proletariat linked to these industries decreased numerically. But the number of people employed by banks, offices, and commercial houses increased fourfold between 1871 and 1901. An ever larger proportion of wage labour was employed as servants (up to 14 per cent of the working people in 1901).

Cumulatively, these circumstances fostered trade-unionist consciousness and hindered the spread of revolutionary socialist ideology among the working class. Some positive changes began to be observed at the close of the 1880s and the early 1890s, when the next crisis stirred disaffection and ferment even among the labour aristocracy and speeded the development of the socialist instinct among the proletarian masses. Despite all obstacles, Engels wrote in 1894, "the masses are moving forward—slowly, it is true, and only striving for consciousness, yet unmistakably".¹

Germany. In Germany this period witnessed rapid industrialisation, the attainment of the most up-to-date level of technology in leading industries, relatively high literacy level, and extremely difficult conditions of life for most industrial workers, conditions reminiscent of those in Britain in the 1830s-1840s.

The industrial working class, especially where there were the greatest concentrations of workers (the Rhine-Westphalia industrial region, Saxony, Berlin), had reached a relatively high level of maturity. Matters were different with the large rural proletariat, concentrated chiefly in the more backward eastern regions—Prussia east of the Elbe and Mecklenburg, where semi-serfdom still thrived with the infinite exploitation of farm labourers as the result. "The actual semi-servitude of the East-Elbe rural workers," Engels wrote, "is the main basis of the domination of Prussian Junkerdom and thus of Prussia's specific overlordship in Germany."²

As a whole, the German working class was burdened by the conditions created by national unification "from above", under Prussian aegis; by the development of capitalism in agriculture on the Prussian pattern, i.e., with the preservation of the large landed estates and survivals of feudalism; by the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the Junkers with their Prussian and militarist traditions; the rule of absolutism. Agrarian protectionism, motivated by the interests of the Junkers, obstructed the development of the agrarian productive forces and placed an additional material burden on all strata, including the workers.

¹ Engels to Friedrich Adolph Sorge, May 12, 1894, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 448.

² Frederick Engels, "The Peasant Question in France and Germany", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 475.

In this situation the development of the proletariat as a class hinged on political organisation and the struggle for civil rights and freedoms. This encountered fierce resistance from the ruling classes. With its advanced section reaching a relatively high level of political consciousness and organisation, the German working class rapidly developed into a powerful force. Among the features distinguishing advanced German workers, Engels noted a "sense of theory" in contrast to the "indifference to theory" of the British proletariat.¹ Little wonder that in the period we are reviewing the theory of scientific socialism was most widely disseminated precisely in Germany, while for the next few decades the German working class was the vanguard of the international working-class movement.

France. The French workers had time and again demonstrated their inherent revolutionary fervour, which, to quote Marx, was so lacking in their British class brothers.² Revolutionary socialism remained the pre-eminent feature of the proletariat's social psychology; this was fostered also by the circumstance that compared with the British bourgeoisie the French bourgeoisie pursued a harder-line class policy, preferring repressions to social legislation and collective agreements.

In France, as in some other West European countries, the character of the worker bore the imprint of past revolutions, of the political freedoms won by the masses, and of participation in socio-political life. The French worker had a high sense of dignity, a revolutionary instinct, and utter contempt for the powers that be. "These superlative qualities of the French worker," A. S. Shapovalov writes, "were seen most strikingly in his ability to uphold his human dignity at the factory. In Paris most of the workers not only cut short any insulting treatment at the hands of the factory management, that was so common in Russia, but even plain discourtesy or scorn by the foremen."³

However, both the composition and character of the proletariat were influenced by French society's economic and social structure during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century. The deceleration of the nation's economic development in the 1870s and 1880s, the low rate of industrialisation, and the extremely small population increment were the reasons for the slow numerical growth of the industrial working class. There was considerable fluidity among factory workers. The labour made redundant in agriculture found

¹ Frederick Engels, "Preface to *The Peasant War in Germany*", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 169.

² Karl Marx, "Confidential Communication", *ibid.*, p. 175.

³ A. S. Shapovalov, *In the Struggle for Socialism*, pp. 731-32.

employment chiefly at tiny artisan and semi-primitive enterprises, a particularly large proportion of which manufactured clothes and luxury goods, that were among the main items of the nation's export. The traditions of parcelled landownership, dating from the bourgeois revolution, spread to the towns: many workers aspired to become and often became small proprietors, opening their own tiny workshops.¹

Another feature of the proletariat sprang from the fact that industry was scattered over a large territory. France had no big industrial centres such as Manchester or Birmingham in Britain, or the Ruhr in Germany. In the northeast and northwest, where heavy industry was most concentrated (coal, metallurgy, metalworking), the factories were scattered in small and medium towns and in rural communities. This made contact between workers difficult and hindered the consolidation of the industrial proletariat.

Small workshops predominated in Paris and Lyons, the nation's main proletarian centres. In Paris skilled workers, particularly metalworkers, preferred to work not at large factories where production discipline was rigid, but in small workshops, where constraints were fewer although working conditions were usually poorer. Some workshops, engaged in precision work for large factories on which they depended, paid skilled workers relatively high wages.

This small-scale, fragmented production inevitably hampered any extension of the worker's world outlook, and in most cases limited him to the framework of his workshop, to relations with his employer. This prevented the worker from getting a coherent picture of economic and social reality, and hence the vitality of petty-bourgeois forms of socialism (Proudhonism, anarchism), which gave the radicalism of the worker masses a special hue.

Italy. The condition and character of the proletariat in Italy mirrored the specific features of Italian society with its long-standing and deep-rooted structural contradictions: backwardness, stagnation of the agrarian south with its persistent semi-feudal practices, the large number of parasitical elements on all the rungs of the social ladder, the small size of the economically active population, and so forth. These contradictions grew more pronounced following the formation of a united nation state.

However, a factory proletariat grew numerically in the principal cities of North Italy—Milan, Turin, Genoa; its numerical strength and proportion of the population were still relatively small, with workers of the textile, food, and light industry predominating. From 70 to 80 per cent of the industrial workers were employed at enter-

¹ In the early 1870s the owners of almost all the Paris small workshops manufacturing luxury items were former workers (Georges Lefranc, *Histoire du travail et des travailleurs*, Flammarion, Éditeur, Paris, 1957, p. 277).

prises providing less than ten jobs. "Throughout the country," Engels wrote in 1894, "the agricultural population far outweighs the urban. In the towns there are few developed industries, hence *typical* proletarians are scarce; handicraftsmen, small shopkeepers and declassed elements—a mass fluctuating between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat—compose the majority."¹

The working class was extremely heterogeneous. The bulk consisted of unskilled workers, including builders, cottage industry workers, and farm labourers. Moreover, there was a large semi-proletarian and lumpenproletarian mass. The small groups of skilled workers were still in the grip of the traditions of guild exclusiveness. Pronounced regional distinctions were still very much in evidence. Unemployment and poverty stimulated mass migration from the south to the north and also emigration. The internal contradictions of Italian capitalism predicated the sharpness of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Austria-Hungary. The characteristics of the working class in Austria-Hungary were determined by a combination of factors such as the disparity in the socio-economic development levels of different parts of the state; the preponderance of foreign capital (chiefly German and French) invested in large-scale industry and attracted by the relatively cheap labour; the multi-tier system of national oppression, which was the most salient hallmark of the Hapsburg empire called a "prison of nations" by contemporaries.

The main centres where the large-factory proletariat was formed were in the Austrian part of the empire, chiefly in Bohemia and Moravia. At the turn of the century at least one-third of the Czech industrial proletariat was employed at large factories with over 100 workers each. However, most of these factories were run by Austrian and German capital.

In Hungary, as in many other East European countries whose economy was predominantly agricultural, the food industry working for export showed the most rapid growth rates, and for that reason food industry workers were the most numerous contingent of the industrial proletariat. As a consequence of a poor development of the textile industry, the proportion of female and child labour was comparatively small. The scarcity of skilled workers was made up by an inflow of such workers from other parts of the empire—Austria and Bohemia. Approximately one-third of the gainfully employed population consisted of rural proletarians or semi-proletarians.

Naturally, the intertwining of burning social and ethnic contradictions in the Hapsburg empire and the spread of the national

¹ Frederick Engels, "The Future Italian Revolution and the Socialist Party", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, pp. 453-454.

liberation struggle of the peoples inhabiting it made a deep imprint also on the development of the multinational working class, on its structural peculiarities and social psychology.

Russia. The factor determining the formation and structure of the proletariat in Russia was that the industrial revolution, hastened by the government itself and by the import of foreign capital, unfolded when the basic question of socio-economic development—the agrarian question—remained unresolved, when it was still not certain what form of capitalist development would predominate in agriculture, and deep-rooted survivals of serfdom were still in evidence in rural communities and in the social system as a whole. The core of the large-factory proletariat had already taken shape, but the workers had no rights, were downtrodden by absolutist tyranny, and remained dependent on survivals of pre-capitalist institutions and relations. The terms of hire were in fact dictated by the employers. Unions and strikes were banned by law and breaches of the “labour contract” by workers were punishable as a felony.

All this directly affected the condition of the workers in and outside production.¹ The working day was one of the longest in Europe and the living standard one of the lowest. At most of the factories in Moscow Gubernia in the 1880s the working day was 12 or more hours (44 per cent of the factories had a working day of 13 or 13.5 hours, 11.6 per cent—14 or 14.5 hours, and 5.4 per cent—15 or more hours). A factory law limiting the “normal” working day to 11.5 hours was passed only in 1897. The workers were subjected to fines. In 1886 the government established that deductions made by factory owners should not exceed one-third of the wage and thereby in effect legalised the practice of openly robbing the workers. Moreover, wages were paid irregularly, in many cases in kind (with manufactured goods or foodstuffs from factory-run shops).

The living conditions and everyday life of the workers were appalling. Many workers employed at small factories in rural localities had no permanent homes: in summer they slept under the open sky near the factory, and in winter in the premises where they worked or in makeshift barracks, dugouts, or in peasant huts. The large factories usually had barracks (in order to cut down fluidity). These were in fact doss-houses—filthy and unventilated; each room had nothing but plank beds and was shared by as many as a score or so of people, with sheepskin coats, old sacking, and so on serving as bedding.

¹ *Essays on the History of the Proletariat of Russia (1861-1917)*, Moscow, 1963; *A History of the Working Class of Russia, 1861-1900*; *A History of the Working Class of Leningrad*, Moscow, 1963; *A Concise History of the Working-Class Movement in Russia (1861-1917)*, Moscow, 1962; *Workers' Living Conditions in Pre-Revolutionary Russia*, Moscow, 1958 (all in Russian).

The diet of the majority of factory workers consisted of rye bread, cabbage soup, and porridge. Meat was a rarity.¹ They usually ate where they worked, frequently by snatches during working time. Food was brought by the workers themselves, sometimes for a whole week, and it was eaten cold. Foodstuffs were purchased either at the factory shop (usually on credit, because wages were paid once in several months or even twice a year) or from private shops run by agreement with the factory owners, who received a percentage from the purchases.

Seasonal workers formed artels. This meant additional economic dependence. Very often artel elders developed into middlemen and participated in the exploitation of workers. At many factories workers could buy goods at the factory shop only through the artel elder, who took a commission for this service. The elders received and distributed wages among the artel members and loaned small sums "until payday" at usurious interest rates. The plight of the workers of small artisan industries was the saddest of all. Usually whole families worked, and the terms were onerous, to say the least. Their working day was in many cases 17, 18, and even 19 hours long.

In Russia real wages were from one-half to one-third of those in the leading West European countries. This disparity tended to widen. This was due to, among other things, the operation of a factor like the gradual levelling up of world grain prices: unlike those in the West, in Russia they tended to rise throughout the nineteenth century up to the outbreak of the First World War.² True, in the 1880s-1890s there was a certain (generally small) reduction of the local price of bread under the impact of the agrarian crisis, but subsequently it sky-rocketed again. For that reason, although cash earnings were raised from time to time, the material condition of most of the workers remained unchanged or deteriorated. In the early 1880s real wages were lower than in the 1860s. The certain improvement during the industrial upsurge of the 1890s was followed by a worsening during the economic crisis of 1901-1904, and a new price rise. In 1899, recalling Marx's well-known words, Lenin wrote that "the growth of 'the mass of misery ...'" as a characterisation of the tendency of capitalism "becomes a reality in the absence of the class struggle of the proletariat against it, in the absence of labour protection laws achieved by the working class. It is precisely in Russia

¹ "All year round our diet consisted of rye bread (white bread was baked only on holidays), soup made from green or sour cabbage, cucumbers, and sometimes buckwheat or millet porridge; we saw milk, meat, and butter not more than twice or three times a year, on the biggest holidays" (F. N. Samoilov, *On the Trail of the Past*, Moscow, 1954, p. 36 [in Russian]).

² Between 1801 and 1914 the local price of grain rose by 50 per cent in Russia, while in Western Europe it dropped by 50 per cent on the average.

today that we see the above tendency manifesting its effect with tremendous force on the peasantry and the workers".¹

Workers employed at metalworking factories were somewhat better off than other contingents of the proletariat: their wages were higher than in industry as a whole. This can well be appreciated because most of these were workers who had entirely broken away from the land and had a higher level of requirements and culture. There were distinctions in the wage levels in individual branches of factory production. The most glaring discrepancy was between the wages of skilled and unskilled workers—a phenomenon seen most vividly in a backward, agrarian country.

Fitters, turners, mechanics, and locomotive engineers were among the most privileged segment of workers. "Skilled workers of those days—'craftsmen'—scorned labourers who had no training."² However, in the economic, social, and political conditions prevailing in Russia a stable labour aristocracy of the British type could not take shape. As Lenin wrote later, in Russia the privileged stratum of factory workers and clerical staff was very thin, and the labour aristocracy enjoyed no serious influence among the worker masses.³

Survivals of serfdom and the despotism of the autocracy weighed down heavily on both the peasantry and the proletariat. The hard lot of the peasants, to quote Lenin, dragged the worker down. Until the 1890s most of the workers were either former peasants or semi-peasants compelled by land-hunger and taxes to leave their villages in search of work (seasonal workers who owned a tiny plot of land). Two-thirds of the large factories (employing over 500 workers each) were situated in rural localities and drew their work force from the surrounding villages. Even many skilled wagedworkers retained some link to the land.⁴

The generally low literacy level, the deep-rooted religious prejudices, and the peasant mentality with all its weaknesses and even reactionary features maintained their grip on the bulk of the proletariat in the post-reform period. Most of the workers still shared

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 233-34.

² A. S. Shapovalov, *On the Road to Marxism. Reminiscences of a Worker Revolutionary*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1924, p. 5 (in Russian).

³ V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and War", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 319-20.

⁴ This concerned workers in large-scale machine production to a lesser extent; only 14.1 per cent of them left for agricultural employment in the summer (V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 536). This proportion was much higher at manufactory-type factories (from 30 to 70 per cent). Many factory workers did not leave for field work but maintained a household in the countryside where it was looked after by their families; others leased their land allotment.

the peasants' faith in a benign "Father the Tsar". In characterising the proletariat of Russia in the decade preceding the revolution of 1905, Lenin wrote that behind the scores of thousands of factory workers, in whom this faith had been undermined in the course of the class struggle, "stood hundreds of thousands, millions, of toiling and exploited people, proletarians and semi-proletarians, suffering every insult and indignity, in whom this faith could still survive".¹

However, this same period saw an extraordinarily quick spread of political enlightenment. As industrial capitalism progressed, more and more workers flocked to the towns, especially the big cities (St. Petersburg, Moscow, Riga, Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, Baku, and so on), the numerical strength of skilled, hereditary workers (of the second and third generations) grew steadily, and they increasingly lost their link to the land. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a considerable rise of the proportion of literate workers (in 1897 the literacy rate was 59 per cent among men workers and 35 per cent among women workers). Atheism spread quickly among the workers,² with more and more advanced proletarians hungrily seeking knowledge and culture, and militant revolutionary activity.

Highly developed, cultured worker revolutionaries appeared in Russia early—in the 1870s. Georgi Plekhanov characterised this type on the example of a St. Petersburg worker, whom he knew, with the following words: "Although his abilities were quite ordinary, he had a rare thirst for knowledge and was amazingly energetic in acquiring it. At the factory he worked 10-11 hours a day, returning home only at nightfall, but day after day he pored over books until well after midnight. He read slowly and, as I noticed, did not easily understand what he read, but whatever he mastered stuck strongly.... He ... lived like a student, in a tiny room in which the only table was piled high with books. When I came to know him better I was amazed by the diversity and number of theoretical questions assailing him. There was little that did not interest this man, who had hardly learned to read in his childhood. Political economy, chemistry, social problems, and the theory of Darwin attracted him equally, exciting his interest, and it seemed that given his condition decades would be needed for him to slake his mental thirst even a little."³

Let us offer another bit of testimony, this time from G. A. Lopatin, a revolutionary Narodnik of the 1870s-1880s. Impressed by the cultural level and breadth of views of the revolutionary workers he

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Revolutionary Days", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 112.

² M. M. Persits, *The Atheism of the Russian Worker (1870-1905)*, Moscow, 1965 (in Russian).

³ G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. III, Leningrad-Moscow, 1928, p. 131 (in Russian).

came into contact with at the Shlisselburg Fortress prison, he told one of them, V. P. Pankratov, that he had not met such workers even in foreign countries. "There the worker Socialists are of an entirely different type. In the first place ... they enjoy freedom and their organisations function legally.... But if you talk to any of them about Russia, America, or any other country, and not about their own homeland, you will find that they know practically nothing. But Karpenko, Volnov, and Antonov (workers Lopatin knew.—*Author.*) surprised me by their erudition and breadth of thought. I am amazed how, working at factories from morning to night, they have managed to read so much Russian and foreign literature—not only fiction but also scientific books."¹

The atmosphere in which the political consciousness of advanced workers formed is excellently conveyed in the reminiscences of I. V. Babushkin, a revolutionary worker. He relates, among other things, that in the Kronstadt torpedo workshop, where he was an apprentice at the close of the 1880s, the workers discussed news and rumours about the activities of revolutionaries in the capital. "They spoke of everything, even of 'state criminals'. It would be hard to tell how interesting these talks were."² Whoever the speaker was, Babushkin tells us, he was listened to with close attention: a policeman or member of the management could appear at any moment. This atmosphere fuelled hatred for the "masters", for the rich generally. The more developed, literate workers, chiefly young people, strove to extricate themselves from the squalor and routine of day-to-day life, come into contact with intellectuals, with people who could supply them with books, including banned literature, answer their questions, and teach them how to act. "Getting a better knowledge of various banned literature, meeting people with revolutionary persuasions, talking with comrades on the same subjects, and making all sorts of plans for changing the entire tenor of life which were beneath criticism when given a close look, we lived in constant excitement,"³ Babushkin wrote.

Acquaintanceship with Marxism was the high point in the intellectual development of advanced workers. "Marxism," A. S. Shapovalov wrote, "turned everything in my head. Hope took the place of comfortless despair."⁴ Their own experience and their reading of Marxist literature increasingly brought advanced workers round to understanding that the proletariat needed class organisation and

¹ *The Working-Class Movement in Russia as Recounted by Workers Themselves*, Moscow, 1933, p. 106 (in Russian).

² *The Reminiscences of Ivan Vasilyevich Babushkin*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 16-17 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴ A. S. Shapovalov, *On the Road to Marxism*, p. VIII.

had to fight for its political rights and freedoms, for socialism. In a speech in court (1901), published in *Iskra*, a Sormovo worker P. A. Zalomov (whom Maxim Gorky used as the prototype for one of the main characters—Pavel Vlasov—in the novel *Mother*) said: "...As I learned of the history of other nations, of which the working classes fought tirelessly and got themselves out of the condition we are now in, I came round to the thought that we too could conduct such a struggle. The hope that at least in the remote future it would be possible to raise the economic and moral level of the ignorant working masses gave me considerable strength. I saw that the struggle would be hard for the workers, that it would be hard to fight the cheerless darkness of ignorance in which the workers and peasants were forcibly kept, that we would have many, very many casualties."¹

In 1870, after having read Flerovsky's *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*, Marx became firmly convinced that a social revolution was inevitable in Russia.² However, the working class of Russia was not a large force at the time; the situation changed radically 30 years later. The social contradictions reached the bursting point in the country. The link that the industrial proletariat had with the countryside was still strong, and this fostered the growth of social activity in both town and countryside. The crisis situation in which the autocracy found itself created the conditions for the spread of revolutionary feeling and socialist views among the working masses, for turning the proletariat into the leader of the imminent revolution.

Japan. The Japanese proletariat came into being in complex and unique circumstances. In the 1870s-1880s the nation underwent what was essentially a period of primitive accumulation. The Meiji revolution (1868) cleared the way for the development of capitalism but did not eliminate the traditional institutions and practices inherited from the feudal epoch. These provided the basis for a system of non-economic coercion on which industrial capitalism depended. State-run, chiefly armaments, enterprises predominated in large-scale industry until the beginning of the 1880s. The monarchy, which represented the reactionary semi-feudal bureaucracy and the chauvinistic samurais, encouraged industrial development with a view to making Japan strong militarily and carrying out a programme of external expansion.

The working class sprang chiefly from former artisans, workshop apprentices, manufactory workers, and peasants deprived of land. One of the widespread ways of recruiting cheap labour for the factories was the purchase of peasant children. Girls were contracted

¹ P. A. Zalomov, *Reminiscences*, Gorky, 1947, p. 4 (in Russian).

² Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Works*, 2nd Russ. ed., Vol. 32, p. 549.

for 8-10 years, after which they returned to the villages usually as semi-invalids.¹

The predominance of early capitalist forms of production determined the structural characteristics of the working class: a relatively small numerical strength and fluidity at factories, a considerable proportion of manufactory and cottage industry workers—who preserved their links to agriculture—and an exceedingly high proportion of female labour, particularly in the spinning and weaving industries (up to 75 per cent of the work force, in most cases up to the age of 14).

The working conditions were determined by the persistence of semi-feudal forms of exploitation. Bonded women textile workers usually lived in barracks on the territory of the mills. From their tiny wage the employer deducted a percentage to pay for the advance given to parents when the children were recruited and for the use of the barracks, for forcible “savings”, for fines, and so on. At some textile mills juveniles worked as “apprentices” for a period of from five to seven years during which they received no wage at all.

Factory legislation was non-existent. There were no days off: only three or four non-working days in the course of a year. Arbitrary action and lawlessness prevailed in industry. With the permission of the prefecture governor the owner of an enterprise could administer corporal punishment. The Japanese newspapers of those years reported, for instance, that on Kyushu Island miners were hung by their hands from the ceiling for an attempt to escape from the mines. At a silk-weaving mill women workers were, for the least neglect of their duties, turned out of the barracks naked and made to stand in the snow for several hours.²

Ideas of the European working-class movement, including trade-unionism, utopian socialism, and anarchism, began to infiltrate Japan massively during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The news of the revolutionary movement in Russia had a particularly perceptible effect on Japanese society. “Words like ‘communism’, ‘socialism’, ‘Communist’, and ‘Socialist Party’ appeared in newspapers and journals. Vera Zasulich’s attempt on the life of Trepov (chief of police in Russia.—*Ed.*) and the heroic struggle of the Russian revolutionaries had reverberations in Japan. The book *Heroines of Europe* was published in 1881; it was followed in 1882 by *A Russian Sensation: A Gallant Girl Assassin....* That same year saw the publication of *Position of the Party of Russian Nihilists*, which contained

¹ *Essays on the Modern History of Japan (1640-1917)*, Moscow, 1958, p. 292 (in Russian).

² A. Petrov, *The Labour Issue in Japan*, St. Petersburg, 1912, pp. 97, 169, 170 (in Russian).

the names of Marx, Kropotkin, and Bakunin. Stepnyak's *Underground Russia* was translated a year later. It was published in secrecy under the heading *The Weeping Devil*; its translator Muryu Miyazaki was imprisoned."¹

IN THE FOCUS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Given all the distinctions of specific conditions, the development of the proletariat's class consciousness everywhere was obstructed by the common obstacles and difficulties springing from exploiting society itself. The spiritual atmosphere of this society was created by the predominant ideological and political influence of the ruling classes; they owned the basic means of material production and were in control of spiritual influences and, most importantly, of power. On its way to the minds of the workers, revolutionary proletarian ideology—scientific socialism—encountered not only "passive" resistance from the conservatism and conformism of the mass consciousness but also the strong resistance of the ruling circles represented by the state, the bourgeois and bourgeois-landowner parties, and the church.

Religious consciousness remained one of the mainstays of conservatism and conformism, although its forms and extent were dissimilar in different countries and among the different social strata. The greatest inclination towards religion was observed among the petty bourgeoisie and the labour aristocracy. In areas where Protestantism predominated, the social psychology of the labour aristocracy mirrored in large measure the influence of Protestant ethics with its accent on professional duty, industry, discipline, and thrift as basic Christian virtues.

Each in its own way, the Catholic, Orthodox and various Protestant churches endeavoured to adjust themselves to the new situation and develop new means of influencing workers. The Catholic Church was extremely active: it oriented the clergy on more active propaganda among workers in order to preserve "social peace", and shaped the ideology of reactionary political Catholicism. Further, note must be made of the spread of religious liberalism (modernism) and the appearance of new schools of Christian socialism.²

In Russia the Orthodox Church was one of the autocracy's principal weapons against the revolutionary movement. Konstantin Pobedonostsev, Procurator-in-Chief of the Holy Synod, initiated the enlargement of the system of parish schools and the formation of

¹ Sen Katayama, *Articles and Memoirs*, Moscow, 1959, p. 256 (Russian translation).

² *Religion and Church in Russian History (Soviet Historians on the Orthodox Church in Russia)*, Moscow, 1975, p. 212 (in Russian).

temperance societies, which were used by the clergy for religious propaganda among workers and the promotion of loyalist feeling. This had the unqualified support of Russian industrialists.

Religion was thus a significant ideological weapon against proletarian socialism. The church profited even from political conflicts with state authority, with secular bourgeois parties. The Bismarck government's persecution of Catholics in the 1870s enabled the Catholic Church in Germany to strengthen its hold on the workers. In approximately the same period the bourgeois radicals in Britain began a vocal campaign against the claims of the dominant Anglican Church to total control of schools. This campaign was conducted under the progressive slogan of freedom of conscience, but in the end it aggravated the conflict between the official church and the various non-conformist denominations, a conflict into which a section of the working masses was drawn. In France the radicals became active under the flaming motto: "Clericalism—that's the enemy." Although it was directed against clerical-monarchic reaction, it gave the clergy a new weapon, and they wasted no time in using it to tighten their hold on the masses under a counter-slogan calling for the protection of religion.

Nonetheless, as capitalism developed it inescapably undermined religious consciousness. The preaching of humility before "God's will" and Christian love of one's neighbour was clearly in conflict with the morals reigning in the world of cash and profit, with the luxurious life of society's elite and the brutality of the authorities. Breakthroughs in the natural sciences, particularly Darwin's great discoveries, led to a spread of atheism, which democratic intellectuals disseminated among factory workers. Of course, Christian morals and principles continued to exercise an influence in secularised form as well. But this did not prevent workers from striking or from voting for Socialists.

The bourgeoisie had to have more effective and more modern means of influencing people ideologically. The education level of the masses was growing. There was now a rising generation of literate young workers, a generation of people who could not only listen to and understand a political speech but also join in discussing complex social and political issues. They could not be talked to solely in the language of religious or moral sermons. More rationalistic arguments had to be presented. New schools of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois social reformism sprang up and spread during the last three decades of the nineteenth century: Henry George's agrarian socialism in the USA, Katheder-Socialism in Germany, Fabian socialism and social radicalism in Britain, and "legal Marxism" in Russia. These schools, aimed against revolutionary Marxism, were supported by liberal bourgeois circles and had some influence among a segment of

the workers. Bourgeois leaders, frequently in direct contact with the church and the government, stepped up their efforts to maintain a hold on and indoctrinate the workers, setting up educational associations, clubs, and other institutions for this purpose.

In some countries suffrage was extended as part of the effort to arrest the development of the proletariat's class consciousness. In order to win the workers' vote and limit the influence of the Socialists, the bourgeois parties pelted people, who were often politically immature, with political programmes, ideological models, and slogans which many workers could hardly understand. A particularly energetic drive for the votes of workers was developed by liberal and especially radical bourgeois parties (the Progressists in Germany, the radicals in France, and the liberal left wing in Britain).

The bourgeoisie gradually learned to use other means of influencing the worker masses. This period saw the emergence in the spiritual life of capitalist society what later became known as "mass culture". Attempts were made to quench the spiritual thirst of the masses with a cheap, gutter press presenting a chronicle of crime and the life of "high society", with second-rate literature, sports sensations, and primitive sex. Recreation pandering to philistine tastes, encouraging thoughtless spending of leisure time, stimulating excitement, and cultivating cruelty and violence was commercialised. By means of "manipulated anti-culture" the bourgeoisie sought to keep the workers—at least their backward section—in spiritual bondage and prevent them from acquiring a class consciousness.

Nationalism was very much in evidence in the ideological indoctrination of the working class. While stimulating national consciousness, the formation of bourgeois nations and integral nation states bred national prejudices—notions about the exclusiveness or superiority of one's own nation and contempt for other peoples. Nationalistic and chauvinistic propaganda found fertile soil also in international relations. The world's final division and the colonial wars were accompanied by virulent chauvinistic campaigns and the intensification of racist propaganda. The repeated "war alarms" on the Franco-German frontier created an atmosphere of tension, which was used extensively by the chauvinists to stir anti-German feeling in France and anti-French feeling in Germany. The slogan of national unity against the "external enemy" was counterposed to proletarian internationalism.

Lenin called the last 30 years of the nineteenth century a relatively peaceful epoch, but used the word "peaceful" in parenthesis. It was peaceful compared with the preceding period, when there were hard-fought revolutionary battles.

Meanwhile, in that period the class battles steadily gathered momentum. The worker question was brought into the focus of poli-

tical life, and even the struggle between bourgeois parties and ideologues was conducted largely over the question of the methods of "containing" the proletariat and over the tactics to be used against the working-class movement.

Needless to say, the worker masses fought chiefly for their direct vital interests: against wage cuts, for higher wages, for a shorter working day, for labour safety, and so on. Most were still far from understanding the ultimate goals of the movement. Some advances were made in the day-to-day struggle and these had contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, they gave rise to reformist illusions, to the hope that fundamental changes could be effected within the framework of the capitalist system. Of course, this was mostly the feeling of the labour aristocracy, although there was also a response among larger sections of the working class. Workers of the "lower strata" believed that since skilled workers had secured a bearable existence they, too, could hope for an improvement of their condition. This hope underlay reformism, conciliation, and opportunism at the level of the philistine consciousness.

But the principal result of the proletariat's social and political advances lay in something else. Every new advance fostered the self-development of the working class, giving it a broader cultural and political outlook. The workers won time for leisure—even if it was minimal—and this gave them the opportunity to participate in the work of their organisations, to read and study, or simply to think not only of their daily bread but also of the future—of their own future and that of their children. This was the only way the socialist consciousness could be instilled.

Workers' participation in struggle was the decisive factor. The struggle required organisation, discipline, mutual assistance, and solidarity, and nurtured these qualities, bringing into being professional organisations and political parties of the working class.

The working-class movement produced its own ideologues and leaders, who helped the masses to understand their own experience and the aims and tasks of the struggle. The movement's leaders themselves learned to organise the masses, mastered the art of politics, and acquired the skill to use the contradictions in the camp of the adversary. The struggle brought to the fore leaders of various levels. These were worker intellectuals, whom Lenin was later to see as the core of proletarian parties.

Already in those years the lofty morals of the proletariat's spokesmen attracted non-proletarian strata of working people. This was due in no small measure to the mounting impact of the working-class movement on society's spiritual atmosphere. Elements of proletarian, socialist culture, which was internationalist in character, sprang up in the course of the class struggle and penetrated

every national culture. The spheres of social consciousness and the philosophical, ethical, moral, sociological, and aesthetic problems on which the proletariat had no opinion of its own steadily diminished. Many of the followers of Marx and Engels were actively promoting proletarian culture. The works on history, philosophy, literary criticism, linguistics, and pedagogics by Georgi Plekhanov, Paul Lafargue, Franz Mehring, August Bebel, Clara Zetkin, and others greatly enhanced the prestige and role of proletarian culture in mankind's spiritual life.

In that period the working class produced its first professional writers, and composers. Workers began to come forward as authors—first as contributors to the workers' press and then as authors of autobiographical narratives in which they wrote of their life, feelings, and thoughts. The first workers' autobiographies mirrored the formation of the new, proletarian, socialist individual, the striving of advanced workers to change social conditions, their notions of a better future worthy of the human being, their desire to assimilate the achievements of science, literature, and art and bridge the gulf between labour by brain and labour by hand.¹

The ruling classes, of course, had immeasurably greater possibilities for influencing spiritual life: a virtual monopoly of higher education, the propaganda apparatus of the church, the services of bourgeois intellectuals, and control of schools, publishing houses, and so on. But despite police roadblocks and a dearth of funds, the working class, too, created its own levers during these decades for the development of socialist and democratic culture: a ramified workers' press, including theoretical journals, printing houses (even though they were few), educational institutions, libraries, clubs, choral societies, sports unions, and—in Germany—a workers' theatre. The cultural and educational activity of the workers' organisations spread out steadily. While promoting the cultural advancement of the class-conscious section of the proletariat and giving it access to humankind's cultural wealth, this activity also raised the proletariat's prestige in the eyes of other sections of working people and sped the adoption of the working-class stand by a segment of democratic intellectuals.

¹ Examples are memoirs published in Germany early in the twentieth century, including: C. Fischer, *Denkwürdigkeiten und Erinnerungen eines Arbeiters*, Leipzig, 1903; M. W. Th. Bromme, *Lebensgeschichte eines modernen Fabrikarbeiters*, Jena-Leipzig, 1905 (2. Aufl. Frankfurt/Main, 1971); A. Popp, *Die Jugendgeschichte einer Arbeiterin von ihr selbst erzählt*, München, 1909; F. Rehbein, *Das Leben eines Landarbeiters*, Jena, 1911; U. Münchow, *Frühe deutsche Arbeiterautobiographien*, Berlin, 1973.

THE WORLD PROLETARIAT

As capitalism developed in breadth, the geographical framework of the international working class widened rapidly, embracing more and more countries. Its formation in the "borderland zone" of capitalism was accelerated by the external expansion of European and US capital. An industrial proletariat formed in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and appeared in Latin America, Northern and Southern Africa, and also India and some other Asian countries.

During the closing decades of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century the concept "world proletariat", which Marx and Engels initially used as a theoretical premise, increasingly acquired a concrete content and became a reality. Further, the proletariat's development as an historical phenomenon was characterised by contradictory tendencies.

The transition from pre-monopoly to monopoly capitalism stepped up the internationalisation of wage labour. This was seen mainly in the growth of labour emigration. The mounting flow of emigrants from Europe reached its peak in the early years of this century: in the period 1901-1910 as many as 12 million persons emigrated from Europe to other continents. This was one of the major factors forming not only the US proletariat but also the working class of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and others), and Northern and Southern Africa.

Simultaneously there was another wave of emigration. At the close of the nineteenth century the leading West European nations themselves began to import labour from less developed countries. By 1907 there were some 700,000 immigrant workers in German industry and agriculture, chiefly from Austria-Hungary, Italy, and the western gubernias of Russia. Britain, which earlier had time and again recruited foreign workers from the European mainland, began importing cheap labour from its imperial possessions (India, the West Indies). There was a growing flow of foreign labour—Italians, Belgians, and Poles—to France; as regards the French colonies, the massive flow of labour to France occurred later, during the First World War.

This growth of labour emigration was ultimately of progressive historic significance. "Hundreds of thousands of workers," Lenin wrote, "thus wander hundreds and thousands of versts. Advanced capitalism drags them forcibly into its orbit, tears them out of the backwoods in which they live, makes them participants in the world-historical movement and brings them face to face with the powerful, united, international class of factory owners."¹ By breaking up the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Capitalism and Workers' Immigration", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 454.

mustiness and backwardness of local life and bringing workers of different countries together at one and the same factories, capitalism created the economic conditions for destroying national partitions and prejudices, uniting the class-conscious workers of the world, and strengthening and developing proletarian internationalism.

But the world labour market was, at the same time, a broader arena of competition among wagedworkers of different nationalities, a competition that was to be observed in individual countries and in the capitalist world market as a whole. The spread of the capitalist mode of production world-wide enlarged the range of distinctions, inevitable under these conditions, in the quality of the labour force, in labour productivity, in the absolute and relative magnitude of exploitation, in wages, and in the living standard of the workers. The monopoly over industry seized by the most developed capitalist nations and their monopolisation of most of the world market and means of international communication temporarily consolidated and even accentuated these distinctions.

Buenos Aires in Argentina, Bombay in India, Shanghai in China, and other large port cities were the main centres of the formation of the industrial proletariat in Latin America, and the colonies and dependent countries in Asia and Africa. The condition, structure, and development level of the proletariat on the outskirts of the capitalist world were determined by the socio-economic backwardness of given nations, the interlocking of the latest forms of capitalism with pre-capitalist relations, and the one-sided development foisted by imperialism on the economy of colonies and dependent countries. There the core of wage labour consisted of railway workers, miners, dockers, plantation labourers, and so on. The worst features of early industrial capitalism multiplied by the influence of the most archaic forms of dependence, by colonial, imperialist oppression, were reproduced in the conditions of the life and work of these people.¹

Imperialism signified the division of nations into oppressors and oppressed. Hence the essential distinctions in the condition of workers belonging respectively to the former and the latter.² Such was the situation in the British Empire, in the imperialist systems of other, large and small, European nations that had "acquired" colonies (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and others), and in the big multinational states such as Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey, where the oppressed national minorities were numerically predominant.

¹ The formation of the proletariat in Latin America, Asia, and Africa is considered in Chapter Nine.

² This is discussed in V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, pp. 55, 56.

Imperialist rule sped the appearance of wage labour also where, unlike the developed countries, the formation of national identity had not yet begun or was at its initial stage, where not even a common national language had taken shape. There were more and more territories and countries with a motley ethnic, multi-racial working class.

The diversity of the actual conditions of various sections of the world proletariat affected the working-class movement. Attention to this was drawn as early as 1869 by Marx. He wrote: "As the stage of development reached by different sections of workers in the same country and by the working class in different countries is bound to vary greatly, the actual movement necessarily expresses itself in very diverse theoretical forms."¹ Almost 40 years later Lenin amplified this by noting: "The international revolutionary movement of the proletariat does not and cannot develop evenly and in identical forms in different countries. The full and all-round utilisation of every opportunity in every field of activity comes only as the result of the class struggle of the workers in the various countries. Every country contributes its own valuable and specific features to the common stream."²

The deficiencies and weaknesses of individual contingents of the international working class could be and were transcended only by organising the workers on a national and international scale, by the revolutionary proletarian vanguard working steadfastly towards that end, and by the day-to-day practical struggles that were constantly producing new experience.

¹ Marx to Engels, March 5, 1869, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 207.

² V. I. Lenin, "Inflammable Material in World Politics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 187.

Part Two

**FIRST EXPERIENCE OF THE DICTATORSHIP
OF THE PROLETARIAT
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
FOR THE WORLD WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT**

THE PARIS COMMUNE

Three dramatic events signalled the emergence of the international proletariat as a class on the international scene in the nineteenth century: the appearance of Marxism as the scientific theory of the proletariat (mid-1840s), the formation of the first large international proletarian organisation—the First International—in 1864, and the first proletarian revolution, the Paris Commune (1871).

The Commune—"a superb example of the great proletarian movement of the nineteenth century"¹—was the high point of the new revolutionary tide that followed the European reaction of the 1850s. The effects of the first world economic crisis (1857) again aroused large sections of the people in the central part of the capitalist world of those years and along its periphery. The questions then on the agenda of European life were linked basically to the incompleteness of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of 1848-1849. The situation demanded the uprooting of survivals of feudalism, which were hindering capitalism's free development, and the formation of bourgeois nation states in Central Europe. A radical settlement of these problems was in the interests of huge sections of working people in town and country, notably of the workers for whose class organisation the winning of democratic rights and freedoms in united nation states was of prime significance.

The liberal bourgeoisie did not venture to rely on the revolutionary people, on the spreading working-class movement, and sought a compromise with feudal-monarchic circles. It sought the satisfaction of its narrow class interests at the price of renouncing major democratic demands (in particular, the establishment of a republic) and even some of the political privileges it had already won (for

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1967, p. 476.

instance, control of the state budget). The striving to accomplish a bourgeois revolution "from above", without the involvement of the masses, determined the specific character of events such as the Italian War of 1859 (which was an intervention against the popular revolution in Italy by Napoleon III with European diplomatic approval) and the Prussian wars against Denmark (1864), Austria (1866), and France (1870), which consummated the unification of the German states under the aegis of Prussia. Throughout the 1860s the ruling circles were faced with an aggravating revolutionary crisis, during which they suppressed the growing resistance of the masses drawn into active political life.

With the bourgeoisie renouncing revolutionary action against the remnants of feudalism, the proletariat increasingly came forward as the only class capable of displaying historical initiative, as the natural leader of the liberation struggle of all the working people. The non-proletarian strata began to show growing confidence in the leaders of workers' organisations and sections of the International Working Men's Association, in those proletarian revolutionaries who were fighting for the most radical and consistent enforcement of bourgeois-democratic reforms.

Their understanding of the proletariat's great historic mission, a mission which Marx and Engels had substantiated, inspired the still small body of committed Marxists of the 1860s (Wilhelm Liebknecht, August Bebel, Paul Lafargue, Johann Philipp Becker, Eugène Dupont, Johann Georg Eccarius, Friedrich Lessner, and Wilhelm Bracke) and determined their tactics in the European liberation movement. This was still a revolutionary-democratic movement; despite the changes that had occurred since 1848 many of the bourgeois-democratic reforms remained unfulfilled.

In the case of France, by 1870 the workers had adopted a most consistent stand in a broad front of struggle against the decrepit, anti-people Bonapartist regime. In a situation witnessing an aggravation of the contradictions generated by the Franco-Prussian war and the fall of the Second Empire, the above-mentioned specifics of the European socio-political atmosphere were seen most strikingly in that country: the urgency of democratic reforms, the bourgeoisie's departure from active struggle for these reforms, and the increasingly decisive role of the proletariat in the struggle. As in previous years, during this crisis period of French society the Paris workers came to the forefront. Still mainly artisan proletarians, who had neither a party nor a scientific theory, they were the only force capable of accomplishing the long overdue democratic revolution. In the course of this revolution, conducted with the determination implicit in the proletariat, they were the first in history to move from the struggle for democracy to a struggle for socialism; they proved that consistent

democracy "is transformed into socialism" and "demands socialism".¹ To quote Lenin, the Commune created by them was a "form of the proletarian, socialist republic".²

COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND EMPIRE.

THE FRENCH WORKING CLASS AND THE IDEA OF A COMMUNE

The misery and hardships caused by the war with Prussia, which broke out on July 19, 1870, were borne mainly by the working people of France. Despite the boasts of the Bonapartist generals, who started the campaign with cries of "On to Berlin!", the hostilities unfolded on French territory after the very first skirmishes. Humiliated national feeling was fertile soil for chauvinistic agitation. The voices of members of the International were muffled. But the war did not rally the nation around the empire, as the Bonapartists had expected. The course of the hostilities showed that the Bonapartist regime was rotten to the core. The very first setback suffered by the imperial army (August 6, 1870) gave the impetus which led to the crumbling of the empire. There was mass unrest in Paris and some provincial cities.

The question of a republic appeared on the agenda. Whether it would be established and what it would be like was determined by the actual alignment of social and political forces in the nation. The republican opposition to the Bonapartist regime was represented by the right-wing bourgeois republicans, the left-wing republicans, and various schools articulating the social and political aspirations of the proletariat.

On the day the *Corps législatif* was to open (August 9, 1870), the Paris sections of the International planned a massive demonstration under slogans calling for the removal of the Emperor, the proclamation of a republic, and the arming of the entire people. The demonstration, whose purpose was to bring direct pressure to bear on the *Corps* and weaken its reactionary wing, was to be conducted together with the left-wing republicans. However, at the decisive moment the latter beat a retreat. The demonstration was dispersed by troops, a state of siege was declared in Paris, and the last democratic newspapers were banned. The Bonapartists managed to strengthen their position for some time.

On August 14, Louis Auguste Blanqui, who had arrived from Belgium, and his supporters made an attempt to start an uprising and seized an army barracks in Paris. Untimely and conducted without taking the mood of the masses and the actual alignment of forces into account, this action was doomed from the outset.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 457.

² *Ibid.*, p. 423.

The failure of the August actions of the republicans did not save the Bonapartist regime. The news that the imperial army had been defeated and surrendered at Sedan (September 1-2, 1870) set in motion a new tide of popular indignation. Spontaneous workers' demonstrations were held in Paris in the latter half of September 3. They were joined by students, soldiers, and members of the National Guard. The demonstrations continued on the next day. Some of the demonstrators broke into the premises of the *Corps législatif* and then into the Town Hall. The Blanquists and petty-bourgeois democrats heading them demanded the formation of a republican government in which the workers and left-wing republicans would have their representatives: Louis Auguste Blanqui, Gustave Flourens, Louis Charles Delescluze, Félix Pyat, and Victor Henri Rochefort. This action was not coordinated with the Paris organisations of the International, which were the sole mass proletarian organisations in the capital, while the leaders of the sections displayed no initiative and did not use their leverage for forming such a government.

On September 4 France was proclaimed a republic. This was unquestionably a victory of the people. But the fruits of this victory were taken by the right-wing republicans, who had the backing of the monarchists, adherents of the House of Orleans. Formed that same evening, the provisional government declared that it was a government of National Defence. The participation in it of the left-wing republican Rochefort marked the transition of the Paris members of this political group to the side of the undisguised adversaries of the working class.

In fighting the empire, the French members of the International Louis Eugène Varlin, Eugène Dupont, and Émile Aubry, and also the Blanquist and Proudhonist publicists Edme Marie Tridon, Auguste Vermorel, Jean Baptiste Millière, and others constantly declared that their stand as "red" republicans, proponents of a social republic, differed from that of the bourgeois republicans, who regarded a republic merely as a more expedient and effective form of bourgeois administration. However, in the heat of the struggle against the empire, at the moment the empire was brought down, this distinction was obscured and republicanism, which united everybody, received prominence. This explains the trust of the people of Paris for the new government. Months of gruelling trial and repressions passed before illusions were shed, before the eyes of the workers were opened, and the class character of the bourgeois republicans, who had seized power, became obvious.

The acknowledged leaders of the Paris working-class and democratic movement quickly realised what had happened. As early as September 4 the heads of the International's sections and of the Federation of *Chambres Syndicales* assembled in the premises of the work-

ers' organisations in the Place Corderie to consider the situation. They were joined by many socialist and democratic publicists.

A seven-man delegation, elected at the meeting, was received that same night by Léon Gambetta, a radical member of the government. Stating that because the situation was complex they were prepared to support the government, the delegates presented the demands of the Paris workers: immediate elections to the Municipal Council, the immediate arming of the National Guard, the dissolution of the Prefecture of Police and the transfer of its functions to the district municipal councils, repeal of extraordinary laws spearheaded against the press and assembly, the release of political prisoners, and so on.

The delegation got nothing out of these talks. However, its demand for municipal elections soon crystallised into a demand for elections to the Paris Municipal Council, the Commune, with whose formation was linked the possibility for arming the people and taking revolutionary defensive measures. This demand proved to be the issue between the workers of Paris and the bourgeoisie, which was inclined to capitulate. "Those citizens who demanded the establishment of the Commune displayed true heroism, a striving to return to heroic Paris its revolutionary initiative,"¹ Varlin wrote on October 19, 1870, in an address to troops of the 193rd Battalion of the National Guard, of which he was the commander. Massive demonstrations calling for the formation of the Commune took place on September 20, 22, 25, 26, and October 5 and 8.

In order to appreciate the impact that the *Commune slogan* had on the Paris masses we must look back to what it initially signified. Universal suffrage extended by the revolution of February 1848 also to municipal elections was repealed by a government decree of July 3, 1848, i.e., immediately after the suppression of the June rising in Paris. The laws enacted later by Napoleon III placed the municipal authorities throughout the nation in a position of total dependence on the government, and reduced mayors and municipal councillors to the status of bureaucracy officials appointed from above. Moreover, two cities—Paris and Lyons—whose population was regarded as particularly unreliable—had no self-government at all and were under the direct jurisdiction of the Prefecture of Police.

Paris with its population of about two million was divided into 20 districts (*arrondissements*), each of which was headed by a mayor appointed by the government. His duties were confined mainly to registering vital civil statistics, keeping the population under surveillance, and monitoring the state of sanitation in the district.

The electivity of municipal councils and the abolition of the special regime for Paris and Lyons were among the democratic demands made

¹ A leaflet from a collection in the archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, CPSU Central Committee.

of the empire even by the parliamentary opposition. In the electoral programme adopted in the spring of 1869 by advanced French workers this demand was formulated as follows: "The communes, departments, and colonies shall be freed from all tutelage in the decision of their internal affairs and shall be administered by freely elected representatives."¹

During the last years of the empire the restoration of municipal rights was a universal, popular demand. This was exemplified by the movement for the election of municipal councils that began throughout the nation during the very first month of the war, prior to September 4. The empire's collapse gave this movement a further impulse; it was placed on the order of the day by the war-time removal and hasty departure of the old prefects alongside the weakness of the central government.

The French workers' understanding of this slogan was unquestionably influenced by their still fresh recollections of the organ of the revolutionary dictatorship of the period of the eighteenth-century bourgeois revolution—the Paris Commune, which was crushed by the Thermidor reaction. It was dear to the hearts of the Blanquists and many veterans of the working-class movement of the 1840s educated in the traditions of that revolution.

These traditions were constantly invoked also by petty-bourgeois democrats, the neo-Jacobins. The interpretation that the Commune of 1792-1794 was a form of direct rule by the people dovetailed to some extent with the theory underlying the Swiss pattern of direct popular legislation, which was vigorously advocated by petty-bourgeois democrats, who endeavoured to start a debate on this question at congresses of the International on the eve of the war.

Lastly, even little-read workers associated the very term "commune" with Proudhon's views that it would be a primary unit of the social system of the future. Proudhonist publicists (Auguste Vermorel, Jean Baptiste Millière, and Pierre Denis) preached full autonomy for communes, making allowance for their federation only as the next voluntary step. To some extent these views, like the Proudhonist "anti-governmentalism", which rejected the need for any administrative authority except the authority exercised by the administered themselves, were a natural protest against the extreme centralisation and oppressive character of the Bonapartist regime. This essentially anarchist interpretation of the concept "commune" was to be found chiefly in theoretical papers and pamphlets.

In the documents directly reflecting the mood of the Paris workers in this period (rules of organisations, appeals, and so on) there are very few echoes of this interpretation, this being evidence that the

¹ Maurice Choury, *La Commune au coeur de Paris*, Editions Sociales, Paris, 1967, p. 31.

Bakuninists had no perceptible influence over the workers of the French capital. Both the Proudhonist idealisation of petty-bourgeois individualism and the Blanquist invocation of the Commune of 1792-1794 were a sort of return to the past. Meanwhile, a new content gradually crept into the Paris workers' understanding of the old slogan of municipal freedoms and commune elections. They saw its realisation not only as meeting their direct aspirations. They linked it to their cherished thoughts, to those dreams that in all ages helped the ordinary people to live and fight.

Much as the Chartists invested the six points of the Charter, formulated by bourgeois radicals, with a new social content, on the eve of history's first proletarian revolution the Paris workers attached a meaning to the popular slogan of municipal elections that gave it a new, epochal significance. In seeking the right to be masters of their city, they learned to see the Commune as an accessible, realistic, and effective form of their class domination. The certainty that the transition of governmental power to the working class was necessary had just gradually crystallised in the collective consciousness of the Paris proletariat. "The Commune then silently elaborated by the proletarian mind," Marx wrote, "was the true secret of the Revolution of the 4th of September."¹

On September 18 German troops completed their encirclement of Paris. A siege began that was to last four months. With the National Defence Government doing nothing to repulse the Prussians, the working people of Paris undertook to resolve many urgent problems and developed ways and means of performing economic and administrative functions such as distributing food, caring for the families of soldiers, providing housing for refugees, and so on. This was also induced by the inaction of the district municipal councils, many of which did not venture to go beyond the narrow powers given them by the empire.

Note must be made, first and foremost, of the initiative shown by a meeting of 500 members of the International and *chambres syndicales* on September 5, 1870, which decided to set up a republican vigilance committee in each of Paris' 20 districts. On September 9 the press published a notice that a Central Committee of 20 Districts had been formed. This showed the extent to which the people were prepared for organised action.

People nominated at meetings of residents of neighbourhoods and individual streets were elected to the *district committees* and to the *Central Committee of 20 Districts*. Some were known to the workers

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 201.

as heads of sections and *syndicats*, and included Louis Eugène Varlin and Benoît Malon, and also the revolutionary publicists Charles Longuet, Jean Baptiste Millière, Jules Valles, and Auguste Vermorel. Others were only beginning their public career here, for instance, Constant Martin, permanent secretary of the Central Committee of 20 Districts and subsequently member of the General Council and one of the secretaries of the London Conference of the International Working Men's Association in September 1871.

Alongside skilled workers, artisans, and craftsmen, who manufactured goods for which Paris was famous, alongside ordinary day-labourers, the republican vigilance committees included clerks, bookkeepers, copyists, teachers, journalists, students, and other "proletarians by brain".¹ Few were over the age of 30. Extant minutes of the sittings of these committees indicate how difficult these first steps in socio-political activity were for these people—honest, devoted, enthusiastic, but inexperienced. They boldly tackled the cardinal issues of proletarian policy but immediately encountered the chicanery of the bourgeois state system, losing precious time discussing their rights, duties, and powers.

The Central Committee of 20 Districts, the first elective body of the revolutionary people of Paris, announced that it would hold its sittings in the premises of the workers' organisations in the Place Corderie, thereby underscoring its class character and its closeness to the platform of the International.

On September 15 there appeared on the walls of Paris a poster known as the first "red poster" (*Affiche rouge*) setting forth a programme declaring that it was the aim of the Central Committee to defend the homeland and the republic. It demanded the electivity of

¹ The composition of the Paris working class on the eve of the Commune is considered by E. A. Zhelubovskaya in *The Downfall of the Second Empire and the Rise of the Third Republic in France*. Although the industrial revolution had been consummated in France at the close of the 1860s, Zhelubovskaya writes, "in Paris, on account of its specific historical development, small artisan production remained more stable than in many other French industrial regions" (p. 26). The latest studies of Jean Bruhat, Maurice Moissonier, Maurice Maitron, and other French historians bear this out. At the international scientific symposium held in Paris to commemorate the centenary of the Paris Commune Professor Ernest Labrousse noted that among the Paris semi-artisan workers, who in 1870-1871 comprised the majority of the capital's working population, class consciousness, chiefly the understanding that the interests of employers and wage-workers were incompatible, was much more developed than among preceding generations. This, he said, was the first indication of "proletarian leadership", noting that the Commune could be "quite justifiably described as the first proletarian revolution" (*Voici l'aube. L'immortelle Commune de Paris. Compte rendu analytique du Colloque scientifique international organisé par l'Institut Maurice Thorez, Éditions Sociales, Paris, 1972, p. 80*).

all officials, the abolition of the police and the transfer of its functions to the National Guard, the arming of the whole people, and the requisitioning of food stocks and housing for the needs of the population.

The most advanced, revolutionary elements of the Paris working class rallied around the 20-District Committee. The latter had the unqualified support of members of the International. In a circular of the Paris Federal Council of the International to the provincial sections, issued soon after September 4, the formation of republican vigilance committees was characterised as the basic task of the International's members in Paris. These committees, formed to "take energetic steps against bourgeois and Bonapartist reaction" and reinforce the defences of Paris, were seen as the "embryo of future revolutionary communes".¹

In parallel with the civil socio-political organisation of the working people, the entire male population was enrolled into the National Guard to meet wartime requirements.

Most of the men in the *National Guard* belonged to the working population of Paris, i.e., the proletariat and the urban petty bourgeoisie that shared its hard life. The election of commanders of the National Guard in the first half of September demonstrated these men's confidence in the leaders of the proletarian movement of the last years of the Second Empire. Among the elected were members of the *chambres syndicales*, the International's sections, staff members of workers' newspapers, and officials of the workers' cooperatives, all of whom subsequently fought in defence of the Commune. However, the election of these most talented and prestigious people had its negative side, for it diverted them from the general leadership of the working-class movement, overburdening them with military duties and even duties of a purely economic character. Commanders had personally to receive food and clothes for their men at the warehouses, and the Bonapartist officials made them stand in queue for hours. The military department was in no haste to arm the workers of Paris. It obstructed the distribution of weapons and supplies of the battalions, procrastinated with its endorsement of the elected battalion commanders, and restricted the powers of the battalion councils—elected bodies, whose duties initially boiled down to economic-organisational functions and then gradually began to acquire a socio-political character.

The National Guard was mustered in all of the capital's districts, and included battalions recruited in the more prosperous, aristocratic neighbourhoods. Better clothed and armed, the men of these battalions belonged mainly to the middle and big bourgeoisie; even if

¹ *Dans l'impossibilité de répondre...*, Paris (septembre 1870).

many of them were patriotically motivated, their devotion to the government and support for it in moments of crisis made them, willy-nilly, accomplices of treachery.

As the struggle of revolutionary elements of the National Guard against impingements upon their rights gathered momentum, the government's treachery and class substance were to be seen in ever bolder relief. The conversion of the finest section of the National Guard into a proletarian revolutionary army to achieve the class aim of the proletariat—the removal from power of the bourgeoisie, whose fear of the armed people made it take the road of high treason—was part of the overall polarisation of social consciousness in a situation which confronted the entire country with the task of defending Paris and the republic and saving the nation.

As forms of organisation, *chambres syndicales* and *sections of the International*, which under the empire had determined the character of the French working-class movement, had to move to the background. With the total mobilisation of the male population the trade unions were, naturally, weakened and disorganised. The exceptions were trades linked to military needs (metalworkers, smelters, and blacksmiths employed in the manufacture of armaments), and also bakers, butchers, and others, who maintained food supplies for the army and the population. Although tailors, sewing industry workers, and shoemakers likewise retained their associations, the making of uniforms passed mostly to women. This period saw the appearance of women workers' organisations (cooperative workshops for the sewing of army uniforms and underwear) and also an association of women nursing the wounded.

The local sections of the International, which conducted propaganda, maintained communication with other cities and countries, collected donations in support of strikers, and so forth, lost their specific function on account of the war and the siege of Paris. Remaining faithful to the International, the section members now looked for ways of applying their energy where the vital tasks of the day were being carried out.

Ideologically, members of the Paris sections aligned themselves mostly with the *Proudhonists*, although on some major issues they had already departed from the Proudhonist dogmas: they saw that they had erred in rejecting strikes and trade unions, in abstaining from the political struggle, and in showing revulsion for collective property. However, the left-wing Proudhonists Varlin, Malon, Combault, Delahaye, Avrial, and Theisz, who inspired and were active in the trade-union movement, organised mass strikes and actions against the empire, and accepted the socialist programme of the International in 1868, were still in the grip of Proudhon's lack of understanding of the role of the state, his negation of any central-

ised authority, and his federalist views. Most of them were unfamiliar with Marx's economic theory and still believed in the healing effects of free credit and the reformist illusions linked with it.

Because the left-wing Proudhonists underrated the factor of organisation, their rupture with the orthodox Proudhonists in the first board of the Paris sections was not formalised. Elements who had in fact been removed from the movement's leadership during the last years of the empire became active again, claiming to belong to the International, but upon winning elective positions they pursued a policy of conciliation with the bourgeoisie. During the siege the deputy mayor of District X, André Murat, abetted the counter-revolutionary steps taken by the government; the mayor of District IX Gustave Chaudey ordered troops to fire on the people during the rising of January 22; Henri Tolain, elected by the Paris workers to the National Assembly, renounced his affiliation with the Commune and sided with Versailles.

Revolutionary militancy, long implicit in the French working class, was most strikingly expressed in the views of the *Blanquists*. Although they were much less numerous than the Proudhonists, the Blanquist workers were a vigorous political force during the siege. They led a number of peaceful and armed demonstrations against the government and planned the rising of October 31. While formerly, on account of the Blanqui-inspired conspiratorial tactics and scorn for economic struggle, they had kept aloof from the International, this estrangement was watered down with the deepening of the empire's crisis and the growth of the workers' revolutionary spirit: Blanquist sections sprang up shortly before the war and during the siege of Paris, and Blanqui's newspaper *La patrie en danger*, published daily from September to November 1870, regularly printed documents of the International and notices of its sections. With their experience of and training in armed struggle the Blanquists were held in particularly high esteem by the National Guard; they gave the Commune its generals—Emile Victor Duval, Gustave Flourens, and Emile Eudes.

Political views very close to those of the Blanquists were held by the *neo-Jacobins*, petty-bourgeois democrats and Socialists, who wanted a social republic and were the spokesmen of the urban non-proletarian working strata. Alongside the courageous Louis Charles Delescluze, whom staunch devotion to the people's cause had brought to the barricades of the first proletarian revolution, there were neo-Jacobins of a different stripe. Having in mind the writer Félix Pyat and Gustave Paul Cluseret, an adventurer who was a general of the United States army in the Civil War and was associated with Bakunin, Marx wrote that they were "mere bawlers, who, by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped declamations

against the Government of the day, have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water".¹

Among the participants in the Paris rising, who were strongly influenced by the International, special mention must be made of those of its members who not only attended its congresses and were active in helping to spread its ideas, but had gone to London where they attended many sittings of the General Council and were privy to its day-to-day work. They included Eugène Varlin, who met Marx in 1865 at the first London Conference and heard him criticise Proudhon; the journalist Charles Longuet, the jeweller Amédée Combault, and the lithographer Jules Paul Johannard, who were at various times (between 1866 and 1869) members of the General Council; Zéphirin Camélinat, who later managed the Mint under the Commune and in 1920 was one of the founders of the French Communist Party (he went to London in the spring of 1867 as the delegate of striking bronze-workers). In September 1870 all these names figured in the lists of the republican vigilance committees of various districts or of their Central Committee.

Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue, who was a member of the General Council for more than three years and the first propagator of Marxism in France, lived in Paris from the autumn of 1868 onward and was closely associated with the leadership of the Paris sections. In the spring of 1870 he helped to set up their federation and chart their tactics against Bonapartism. When war broke out, he moved to Bordeaux with his wife and two-year-old child, but returned to Paris for a few days in April 1871.

The Hungarian Social-Democrat Leo Frankel, member of the Central Committee of 20 Districts, active propagator of the International in France, and head of the German section in Paris in 1869-1870, had read Marx's *Capital* and used material from it for his speech in defence of the Paris sections when they were tried in the summer of 1870. That same summer, when the entire leadership of the International's Paris Federation was arrested, the Hungarian jeweller Henry Bachruch, who was evidently also a Social-Democrat, and Charles Keller, who made the first French translation of *Capital*, headed a public relations commission. Bachruch then became a member of the Paris Federal Council of the International. He corresponded with Marx: extant is his letter written on September 5, 1870, to which Marx promptly replied, stating the stand which he

¹ Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 229. The popularity enjoyed by Pyat and Cluseret was fostered by the fact that while they were in no way linked with the proletarian class movement, both had declared their affiliation to the International and claimed to speak in its name.

felt the French working class should take towards the provisional government.¹

A graduate of German universities and member of the International and of the Central Committee of 20 Districts, Edouard Vaillant was friendly with the German and Austrian Social-Democrats Wilhelm Liebknecht, Johann Philipp Becker, Andreas Scheu, and Johann Most: in the Commune he was one of the most prominent representatives of the Blanqui school. His knowledge of the German working-class movement gave him a significantly broader political outlook, frequently prompting tactically expedient solutions of the problems under discussion.

The fact that these gifted men were available could have greatly benefited the organisation of the Paris workers and considerably strengthened its leadership. But that did not happen. Having fallen short of consolidating the proletariat in a political party during the last days of the empire, the Paris Federation of the International and its Council were unable to assume the direction of the revolution and lost their leading role. But it should be borne in mind that during the national crisis of 1870-1871 the advanced workers of Paris, reared by the International, sought to implement its programme consistently in keeping with their revolutionary traditions. Little wonder that the forms of organisation evolved by them quite closely coincided with the forms mapped out by Marx and Engels in the *Address of the Central Authority to the League* for the period of bourgeois democracy on the eve of the proletarian revolution² (although this crucial document of Marxism, circulated secretly in the early 1850s among the German members of the League, could hardly have been known widely in France).

In creatively tackling the task posed by history the workers of Paris drew mostly upon the experience of the struggles of 1848, and since this experience was generalised in the conclusions drawn by Marx in 1850, the coincidence of these conclusions with the actions of the Paris workers in 1870 was inevitable. This convincingly bore out the Marxist theory.

In pressing for their demands the workers of Paris came into sharp collision with the *Government of National Defence* headed by the military governor of Paris, General Louis Jules Trochu. Contemporaries maintain that a few months before the empire fell, members of the future Government of National Defence met in secret

¹ Marx and Engels, 6. September 1870, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, S. 54, 719.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Address of the Central Authority to the League, March 1850", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, pp. 281-83.

to map out their line of action in the event of war with Prussia. These few deputies, representing the republican opposition in the *Corps législatif*, had a definite plan of action: proclamation of a republic, the conduct of hostilities, and, at the same time, steps to prevent a social revolution.

In his character sketches of the Ministers Jules Favre, Jules Ferry, Jules Simon, Adolphe Cremieux, and their associates, the French reactionary historian Jacques Chastenet writes: "Bourgeois to the marrow of their bones, dedicated proponents of order and property, they were firm in their belief that democracy had not only to be respected but also guided." They combined reverence for "illustrious ancestors", faith in democracy, intelligence, and progress, with "great distrust for everything 'social'".¹

This is a very convincing group portrait. It was written many decades later with the express purpose of justifying the betrayal of France by its ruling classes in the tragic years marked by events such as the 1938 Munich deal, the phoney war, and the nazi occupation of France. In fact, in 1870 these people were prepared to go to all lengths to withhold state power from the only legitimate claimant, the heir of three revolutions—the sovereign working people of France. Almost from the outset Paris publicists and street wits justifiably stigmatised these people, calling them a Government of National Defection.

Frightened by the spontaneous organisation of the working people of Paris without any apparent leadership, and fearing to arm these masses against the Germans, the government hastily tried to conclude peace. The first step on this ignominious path was a meeting between the Foreign Minister Jules Favre and Bismarck on September 19, 1870. The terms Bismarck made seemed unacceptable at the time even to Favre; the latter returned to Paris determined that the war should be continued. General Trochu's plan was adopted, namely, to exhaust the revolutionary masses by locking them in the besieged capital.

From the very beginning the republican government had the support of the monarchist Louis Adolphe Thiers, who had been Prime Minister under Louis Philippe. He refused a post in the government but acted as its adviser. A committed opponent of the war against Prussia, he saw an immediate peace settlement at any price as the sole means of salvation from a social (i.e., proletarian, socialist) revolution. He willingly accepted the unofficial diplomatic mission of inclining European powers towards mediation in favour of France.

¹ Jacques Chastenet, *Histoire de la Troisième république. 1. L'enfance de la Troisième, 1870-1879*, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1952, pp. 15, 16.

His route took him to St. Petersburg, Vienna, Florence, and London, but he got nothing for his pains.¹

Rumours of what the government was doing reached the Paris revolutionaries, confirming their suspicions. In his newspaper *La patrie en danger* Blanqui sharply criticised the lack of prompt action to defend the capital, writing on September 19: "The government fears the revolution more than it fears the Prussians." After the demonstration of October 8, the government charged that the Blanquists were planning a rising and ordered the arrest of their leaders. However, the National Guard battalions in the working-class districts dependably protected Blanqui and Flourens.

In the besieged capital the masses reacted sensitively to every piece of news from the front. The news of the fall of the fortress of Metz, which was surrendered to the Germans by Marshal François Achille Bazaine on October 27, sparked the *rising of October 31, 1870*. The movement began spontaneously before its leadership could be taken over by the Blanquists and the Central Committee of 20 Districts, who were planning action. Demonstrators, carrying banners with slogans calling for elections to the Commune, a war to the end, began assembling in various parts of the city. A large crowd gathered in front of the Town Hall. They were joined by Blanqui, Flourens, and Millière, as well as the heads of many sections of the International, and the representative of the General Council Auguste Serrailier; apparently, Varlin was also there. However, the Federal Council did not call upon members of the International to take part in the action. The lack of unanimity and the uncoordinated character of the actions taken by the insurgents enabled the government, which was at first caught unawares and compelled to name November 2 as the date for the long-awaited elections to the Commune, to summon loyalist troops to the Town Hall. Some of the movement's leaders were arrested; many had to go into hiding. The failure of the rising of October 31 again posed the question of a united political party of the revolutionary proletariat.

Going back on its promise, the government cancelled the elections to the Commune. Instead, moving quickly, it held a plebiscite on November 3 in accordance with all the rules of Bonapartist demagoguery. This brought a confidence vote of 500,000 affirmative against only 60,000 negative ballots and strengthened the government's hand. It mounted an assault on democratic rights, setting up military tribunals, purging battalion commanders and councils, and removing "unreliable" mayors from office.

Meanwhile, the developments on the field of battle and the re-

¹ Georges Bourgin, *La guerre de 1870-1871 et la Commune*, Les Editions Nationales, Paris, 1939.

revolutionary movement in the provinces created a situation in which a triumphant workers' rising in Paris would have turned the course of events and changed their character; this was hoped not only by the Parisians—the Blanquists and leaders of the Central Committee of 20 Districts—but also by proletarian revolutionaries in the provinces and also in other countries.

Marx felt that these hopes were quite realistic. He wrote: "The victorious establishment at Paris of the Commune in the beginning of November 1870 (then already initiated in the great cities of the country and sure to be initiated all over France) would not only have taken the defence out of the hands of traitors, and imprinted its enthusiasm on it as the present heroic war of Paris shows; it would have altogether changed the character of the war. It would have become the war of republican France, hoisting the flag of the social Revolution of the 19th century, against Prussia, the banner-bearer of conquest and counter-revolution."¹

Engels developed analogous views in October-November 1870 in *Notes About the War*.² France had not exhausted its resources at the time. After all their reverses and losses the French forces were still the equal of the forces fielded by the German states. On October 7 Léon Gambetta, a left-wing republican member of the provisional government, flew out of the besieged capital in a balloon. He was authorised, upon reaching Tours, a city fairly remote from the theatre of hostilities, to head the mustering of new armies for the defence of the French republic.

Following the revolution of September 4, considerable importance, alongside the standing army, was acquired by volunteer units known as *franc-tireurs*. The Germans stepped up repressions against civilians in order to crush these irregular units, which were inflicting heavy losses on them. The punitive operations and the burning down of villages angered the French population, making them stiffen their resistance to the enemy. This was becoming a people's war.³

It seemed that Gambetta's skill as an organiser and his patriotism would enable him to make the utmost use of this popular resistance. But success required an appeal to the nation's main force—the working masses. However, fear of the proletarian movement, examples of which he had seen in Paris, prevented him from doing just that. The apprehension that the people's war would develop into a revolutionary class war fettered this bourgeois statesman. The hues of political thinking that drew a dividing line between Gambetta's

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 146.

² Friedrich Engels, "Über den Krieg", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 17, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, S. 180.

³ *Ibid.*, S. 167, 169.

republican, democratic views and the views of other members of the provisional government did not prevent him from becoming a party to their treachery.

At that moment it was only the triumph of the proletariat of Paris that could change the situation and release all of the nation's forces for resistance to the enemy. The success of the rising of October 31 would have at once placed Paris at the head of the revolutionary-democratic movement that had been sweeping across the nation since August 1870.

In *Lyons*, the second largest city in France after Paris, the republic was proclaimed on September 4, 1870, a few hours earlier than in the capital. In the specific conditions prevailing in this large working-class centre, known as the Manchester of France, the anti-Bonapartist industrial bourgeoisie, whose economic and political interests had been impinged upon by the excessive centralisation in the Second Empire, propounded a radical form of republicanism that had a social hue and was very accurately oriented toward support from the workers. Many radicals were popular in the proletarian neighbourhoods as veterans of 1848 or as participants in actions against the empire. Together with the workers they were represented on the Committee of Public Safety set up on September 4.

Although it was numerically large and had glorious revolutionary traditions, the Lyons proletariat did not have a ramified network of grass-roots class organisations such as existed in Paris. The Bakuninists, who headed some of the Lyons sections of the International, held their members back from participation in the political struggle, while the sections that censured this abstentionism of the Bakuninists were unable to map out their own political line, with the result that they found themselves dependent on the bourgeois radicals. In the course of 10 days the Committee of Public Safety passed a series of resolutions aimed at improving the condition of the working people: the repeal of the *octroi* (tax on food brought into the city), the return to the people of the clothes and work instruments pawned by them, the establishment of state-run workshops, and the employment of 15,000 jobless people on the construction of fortifications.

Some of these resolutions represented a partial satisfaction of the democratic demands in the minimum programme of the working class put forward by the International: the cessation of subsidies to church or religious institutions and the enrolment of priests and monks into the army; the abolition of the police and the formation of the Committee for Public Security; the election of police commissioners on the basis of universal suffrage. A few of these resolutions, motivated by wartime requirements, were even directed against bourgeois property: a tax on real and personal property amounting to 0.5 per cent of its value, and the requisition of 20 million francs.

The fact that the city had a large working-class population thus not only compelled the radicals to adopt decisions meeting the needs of the workers but also gave these radicals sufficient leverage to act contrary to the political line of the central government and, in some cases, despite its express instructions. However, the leaders of the workers' organisations were unable to use this situation for strengthening the political position of their class or winning a decisive say in the Lyons Commune elected on September 15, 1870. The workers' delegates conducted no direct educational activity among the bulk of the working people, who in effect had no day-to-day leadership. In this situation the events of September 28, 1870, fomented by agitation by the Bakuninists, took place.

While in his Second Address on the Franco-Prussian War, made on behalf of the General Council of the International, Marx urged the French sections to use republican freedoms for strengthening proletarian organisation and warned them against premature actions,¹ the Bakuninists in the south of France took the news of the empire's fall as the signal for anarchist "social liquidation". Bakunin himself arrived in Lyons in mid-September. The Committee for the Salvation of France was instituted on September 17 at a rally attended by delegates from Marseilles and other southern French cities. In addition to a core of Bakuninists—participants in the Alliance—this committee included many members of the International and these were only partially informed of Bakunin's plans.

Posters proclaiming the programme of the Revolutionary Federation of Communes appeared on the walls of houses on the day before the scheduled rising. It "decreed" the abolition of the "governmental and administrative apparatus" as having proved its impotence, the replacement of criminal and civil courts by "people's tribunals", and the convocation of a Revolutionary Convention in Lyons.

At about noon on September 28, 1870, Bakunin, accompanied by his closest associates and General Cluseret, appointed to command the Lyons volunteer units, took over the Town Hall. From the balcony the programme was announced and General Cluseret made a patriotic speech. The programme and the speech were applauded by the workers of state-run workshops and newly-recruited troops, but the anarchist slogans failed to win the support of the majority of the people in the square. On the contrary, most felt it was important to bring order, in other words, to set up an effective defence and drive the Germans from French soil. Two battalions of the National Guard, that had come to protect the Municipal Council, were cheered by most of the people at the rally. Within a few hours the participants in the would-be coup dispersed. Bakunin was detained, but two or

¹ *The General Council of the First International, 1870-1871, Minutes*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, pp. 340-41.

three days later was able to go to Marseilles, from where he travelled to Genoa.¹

In the southern provinces (*départements*) this Bakuninist gamble, which used the name of the International as a cover, discredited the only proletarian organisation that enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the French workers, exposed genuinely revolutionary elements to danger, made the bourgeois radicals fear the working-class movement, and ultimately strengthened the hand of the counter-revolutionary central government. The Lyons radicals soon withdrew all further support for the revolutionary-democratic movement.

In *Marseilles* the working population rose in revolutionary protest against the engineers of the shameful war earlier than in Lyons. On August 7 a many-thousand-strong demonstration elected a revolutionary committee consisting of radicals and workers, which held out in the Town Hall for two days. It was headed by Gaston Crémieux, a 34-year-old lawyer and left-wing radical with views close to those of the International. He was a consistent democrat and was known in the city as an advocate of the poor. Unlike most of the bourgeois radicals, who initially played a prominent part in the revolutionary-democratic movement in the province and gradually gave in to the counter-revolution, Crémieux remained faithful to the cause of the working people to the end.²

Formed during the last years of the empire, the Marseilles Federation of the International united shipbuilding workers, dockers, artisans, clerks, and shop assistants. It was headed by a member of the Bakuninist Alliance André Bastélica, a young printer, who had come into contact with local radical politicians under the empire and helped to bring the most active segment of the working population under the influence of the radicals. Having lost the initiative, the Marseilles workers were unable to regain it when the radicals, abandoning the revolutionary struggle, left the working masses to the mercy of fate.

For a while the support of the civil guard, which included proletarian and petty-bourgeois elements, enabled Alphonse Esquiros, a veteran member of the Southern French radicals who was appointed "chief administrator" for the province after September 4, to maintain a revolutionary stand. An acknowledged leader of the revolutionary-democratic camp, he was elected President of the League of Southern France that was set up in Marseilles on September 18. This league was

¹ Marx to Edward Spencer Beesley, October 19, 1870, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 235; Maurice Moissonier, *La Première Internationale et la Commune à Lyon (1865-1871)*. *Spontanéisme—Complots et "lutes réelles"*, Éditions Sociales, Paris, 1972, pp. 253-66.

² For his commitment to the Paris Commune he was sentenced to death by a military tribunal and shot on November 30, 1871.

founded by the most active segment of the middle merchant and industrial bourgeoisie that undertook to organise local defence because of the weakness of the central government and the inefficiency of the military leadership.

The League embraced 15 provinces situated between the Alps, the Cevennes, and the Mediterranean on a territory comprising an integral geographical and economic complex. Its programme contained the key democratic demands advanced also by the French sections of the International: disbandment of the standing army, separation of church and state, electivity of officials, abolition of sinecures and life-long appointments, and freedom of the press. Moreover, the programme had provisions springing from the League's special, military tasks: a tax of 30 million francs to be levied "on the rich"; the right to commandeer property for military purposes (premises, vehicles, and so forth); confiscation of the property of traitors; a ban on the shipment of gold abroad. The compilers did not find it necessary to give this programme a larger social context, putting forward demands related to the economic interests of the working people. Nonetheless, at a meeting of the League in Marseilles on September 22, 1871 Bastèlica announced that the Marseilles Federation of the International, which he said had nearly 4,000 members,¹ was unconditionally joining the League.

It is hard to say to what extent the emergence of the League actually revived the plans of the Southern French bourgeois federalists to form an autonomous Provence Region. In any case, the League's leaders were suspected of harbouring separatist ambitions despite their repeated declaration of the principle of a united and indivisible France.

The first blow to the League was struck by the abortive Bakuninist coup in Lyons, which spelled the breakaway of one of the most important centres. Then difficulties were encountered in raising funds for armaments and the maintenance and training of new recruits: the Marseilles Municipal Council refused to tax "rich" citizens as required by the League Programme. Ired by this refusal, units of the civil guard marched to the Town Hall and on November 1 proclaimed the Marseilles Commune. Intervention by the central government, which sent a special representative, led to the resignation of Esquiros, who had no stomach for an open struggle. On November 7 the Town Hall was cleared of insurgents and the civil guard was disbanded. The League of the South folded up its activities, was outlawed, and at the close of 1870 it was dissolved.

The programme advanced in the course of the massive revolutionary-democratic movement in Southern France after September 4 did

¹ Antoine Olivesi, *La Commune de 1871 à Marseille et ses origines*, Librairie Marcel Rivière et Cie, Paris, 1950, pp. 102-03.

not differ much from the programme of the Paris workers' organisations. The commune was the keynote or slogan of both programmes. But whereas in Paris this slogan was put forward by the revolutionary workers and, encountering an immediate rebuff from the ruling classes, led to the consolidation of the proletariat's independent stand, in the provinces, due to the inadequate organisation of the workers and the weakness of their leaders, who were infected with anarchist ideas, the same slogan was advanced by bourgeois radicals, who seized the political initiative. In their hands it became a means of bridling the revolutionary upswing and subordinating the movement to the local interests of the bourgeoisie. After fulfilling their task the bourgeois radicals vanished from the scene, while the revolutionary workers (principally the most militant cadres) provoked by them into adventurist actions were routed and persecuted. After October 1870 the leaderless and demoralised revolutionary-democratic movement outside the capital died away. The people's dissatisfaction with the anti-national policies of the provisional government, whose position had by then been strengthened by the surrender of the radicals, was expressed only in local and shortlived actions.

In the meantime, in *Paris* the proletarians continued to close ranks and prepare for a decisive battle.

A severe winter approached. Food and fuel were scarce. Artillery was brought into action, starting fires and sowing destruction. Many people were left homeless. The government showed no concern for the working population. In this situation the spontaneous organisation of the masses acquired growing importance. The cooperative canteens and the workshops for the unemployed, set up by Varlin under the empire, were reopened. Members of the International's sections took part in their work and this reanimated the sections politically.

In the latter half of November the Federal Council issued an appeal to all citizens, which began with the words: "Citizens, at a time when French territory has been overrun." It went on to say that the workers' organisations, which had earlier withdrawn their class demands so as not to obstruct the defence effort, were alarmed by rumours of an imminent capitulation and restoration of the monarchy, and were now protesting strongly against the outrageous peace. The appeal demanded the unconditional recognition of the republic, a purge of the Bonapartist apparatus, the provision of raw materials and workshops to the workers for the manufacture of armaments, the requisition of food and fuel, rationed supplies for the population, and strict measures against traitors and capitulators; the political demands included elections to the Paris Municipal Council, the abolition of the Police Prefecture, the separation of church and state, accountability and removability of officials, and

some other democratic changes. The appeal ended with a proclamation of the principle of commune federation, the demand of "land to the peasant, pits to the miner, and factories to the worker", and the slogan of a world democratic and social republic.¹ This programme was based on the experience gained by the workers of Paris and, in many respects, anticipated the political and social programme of the Paris Commune.

In the winter of 1870-1871 the Central Committee of 20 Districts became the focal point of the revolutionary movement. With its network of district vigilance committees it had every justification for regarding itself as the spokesman of all the working people of Paris.

In early January 1871 it appointed a 22-man commission from among its members and also a secret Committee of Five to pave the way for overthrowing the government. The Five were the Blanquists Ferré, Sapia, Tridon, Vaillant, and Leverdays. The latter three wrote the famous *Affiche rouge*, a programme appeal to the people of Paris published on January 6.

While in the November appeal of the International's sections criticism of the government was circumspect, the *Affiche rouge* bluntly called the existing regime the "continuation of the empire". The provisional government, it said, had failed to cope with national defence and had thereby to be removed. It ended with the words: "Room for the people! Room for the Commune!" It was signed by 140 delegates from 20 republican vigilance committees.²

In a situation in which the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie was poised for the final act of the sanguinary farce of the defence of Paris—the capital's surrender and the signing of an armistice—the appeal was actually a call for a rising. The people saw the Central Committee of 20 Districts as the proletarian authority that had only to drive out the traitorous government. "The Commune exists," declared a speaker in one of the clubs, "and all we have to do is to invest it with authority!"³

On January 19-20, 1871, the government sent troops to Buzenval to bleed and demoralise workers' battalions of the National Guard. Planned in secrecy, this operation failed, but the Guard suffered heavy losses.

The anger of the Parisians over this pointless bloodshed and over the news of the imminent surrender exploded into a *rising on January 22*. With the way to it cleared by the Five, it was supported also

¹ *La Patrie en danger*, November 26, 1870.

² *La Commune de 1871 sous la direction de Jean Bruhat, Jean Dautry et Émile Tersen*, Éditions Sociales, Paris, 1960, pp. 82-83.

³ M. G. De Molinari, *Les clubs rouges pendant le siège de Paris*, Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, Paris, 1874, p. 211.

by the Federal Council of the International. "In the face of capitulation the International discharged its duty," Varlin declared at the time.¹ However, this time, too, the rising was defeated. Government troops, which had occupied the Town Hall well in advance, fired at the workers' columns at point-blank range. The bourgeois democrats, who had initially supported the idea of a rising, now abandoned the workers. The outcome of the struggle was decided by, among other things, the exhaustion of the working population, which was worn down by hunger and privation.

On January 28 the French Government and Bismarck signed an armistice. The final decision on the question of war and peace was to be adopted by the National Assembly, the elections to which were hurriedly set for February 8.

In Paris the preparations for the elections led to a further demarcation between the revolutionary proletarian forces and the conciliators. The right-wing Proudhonist Henri Tolain marked his defection to the bourgeoisie by agreeing to stand for election in the bourgeois list, in which ironically he figured as a "representative of the International". The discussion of the election lists in Paris' proletarian organisations, notably in the International's Paris sections, showed that the working class in the capital was still counting on influencing the policy of the bourgeoisie by electing prestigious representatives to the National Assembly.

The results of the elections in Paris did not justify these expectations. Only Tolain and Malon were elected. Varlin polled 58,000 votes and thus failed to qualify for a seat. But the election results in the provinces were the most terrible blow for the people of Paris, who did not have a clear picture of the situation outside the capital. "But even before her vote has been proclaimed," wrote the historian Lissagaray, who took part in the events, "she heard coming forth from the provincial ballot boxes a savage cry of reaction. Before a single one of her representatives had left the town, she saw on the way to Bordeaux a troop of rustics, of Pourceaugnacs, of sombre clericals, spectres of 1815, 1830, 1848 . . . who . . . came by the grace of universal suffrage to take possession of France."² This was the assembly stigmatised at one of its very first sittings by the Marseilles revolutionary Gaston Crémieux, who, when Giuseppe Garibaldi was jeered, cried from the balcony: "Rural majority! disgrace of France!"³

The National Assembly began its sittings on February 12, 1871

¹ *Les séances officielles de l'Internationale à Paris pendant le siège et pendant la Commune*, E. Lachaud, Éditeur, Paris, 1872, p. 46.

² Prosper Oliver Lissagaray, *History of the Commune of 1871*. Translated from the French by Eleanor Marx-Aveling, International Publishing Co., New York, 1898, p. 43.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

in Bordeaux, far from the insurgent capital. It endorsed the preliminary terms of the shameful peace and elected the reactionary Louis Adolphe Thiers to head the government. Securing the support of his recent enemy, Bismarck, Thiers set about carrying out the mission entrusted to him by the French bourgeoisie—the pacification of Paris. He took a series of steps designed to provoke another rising and drown it in blood. The wartime deferment of the payment of rents and promissory notes was cancelled, freedom of the press was re-curtailed, some republican newspapers were closed, and the state of siege was resumed.

Sensitive blows were dealt the National Guard, which, by the terms of the armistice, retained its weapons and was, therefore, a serious obstacle to the counter-revolutionary plans of the bourgeoisie. The government annulled the miserable pay received by National Guardsmen. The Bonapartist Joseph Vinoy, a man hated in Paris, was named commander-in-chief of the Guard. At the close of February he ordered all of the National Guard's cannon (of which there were over 300), cast on money donated by the working people of Paris, to be moved to the city's western (bourgeois) districts. Refusing to obey this order the Guardsmen, helped by workers, dragged all the cannon to the heart of proletarian Paris, to the hills of Montmartre and Chaumont. A struggle unfolded between the working class, around which the working strata of the population rallied more and more closely, and the forces of reaction over the question of the National Guard keeping its cannon.

One of the Thiers government's attempts to seize these cannon by force at dawn on March 18, 1871, was the impetus for the armed rising of the Parisian workers and the proclamation of the Paris Commune.

THE PARIS WORKERS IN POWER

The Central Committee of the Republican Federation of the National Guard, the new directing body of the mass revolutionary movement, quickly took shape and moved into the forefront in the course of February 1871.

The formation of this Federation, started in connection with the elections to the National Assembly, was accelerated by the attempts of reactionary officers to seize the initiative. On February 24, 1871, a general meeting of commanders and troops resolved that there would be a broad discussion of the Federation's draft statutes at company meetings; the interim committee called upon the troops to obey only their elective commanders and keep their weapons.

The Federation was finally formalised and the elections to the Central Committee took place on March 3 in an atmosphere of enthu-

siasm and defiance of reaction. The most prestigious, revolutionary commanders were elected to the Central Committee. With the pledged support of the Paris proletarian organisations it began its sittings on March 6 in a house in the Place Corderie. To avoid misunderstanding, the Committee of 20 Districts reassumed its initial name—Delegation of 20 Districts.

Backed by armed battalions with nearly 300,000 effectives the National Guard Central Committee was a substantial force serving the cause of the proletariat. It quickly won the confidence of the masses and on March 18 was able to act as the centre directing the proletarian rising.

By that time it had become quite clear to the capital's working masses that the so-called higher classes, i.e., those who by virtue of their education and status in society should, it seemed, have been the first to rise to defend France, had in fact betrayed it and proven to be enemies of the people. In the hour of national humiliation and distress the eyes of all the working people were turned to those who had exposed the traitors, stood on guard of the interests of the working population from the very beginning, and demonstrated that they were solicitous champions and masters of the city—to the leaders of the proletariat.

These leaders, members of the vigilance committees, sections, and *chambres syndicales*, and battalion commanders, showed a growing sense of responsibility to their class, to the entire mass of working people, to the whole nation. From criticism of the bourgeois, counter-revolutionary government, from the first attempts to overthrow it, from the demand, dating from the elections, to arraign it before a tribunal for high treason they moved to the conclusion that they had to take the administration of the nation into their own hands. "In rising against the old regime," Lenin wrote, "the proletariat undertook two tasks—one of them national and the other of a class character—the liberation of France from the German invasion and the socialist emancipation of the workers from capitalism. This union of two tasks forms a unique feature of the Commune."¹

The necessity of the proletariat winning political power—a vital conclusion drawn by Marx and Engels from their scientific, philosophical generalisation of the experience of popular revolutions and the liberation struggle—now became an imperative for the Paris workers. Fulfilment of this imperative was the only way out of the catastrophic situation.

This idea of the workers seizing political power was given its first-ever clear expression in early February in the election poster of the Place Corderie committees. This short document, which may

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 475.

be called the matriculation certificate of the Paris working class, contained two demands as the guarantee of the republican system: "the proletariat must assume political power" and "the government oligarchy and the industrial feudal barons must be deposed".

The conviction that the bourgeoisie was incapable of accomplishing the national task and the understanding that it was their mission to carry it out struck such deep roots in the minds of the workers that this communicated itself to their potential allies: the non-proletarian mass of the working people in the capital. At this moment of high revolutionary tension they rallied around the working class, recognising its leadership and even speaking its language.

This concentration of all patriotic forces around the proletariat was speeded up by the government's assault on democratic freedoms, chiefly by its conflict with the National Guard over the matter of cannon. While the disarming of the Parisian workers was indispensable for the success of Thiers' counter-revolutionary plans, for the people of Paris the retention of weapons was the sole guarantee of the rights they had won, an indispensable condition for the realisation of their cherished aspirations, namely, the election of the Commune, the strengthening of the republic, and, in the final analysis, the restoration of the nation's trampled dignity. To surrender their weapons would mean to lose everything: freedom, hopes for the future, and life itself. The antagonism between the reactionary bourgeoisie and the proletariat as a rising class stood out in bold relief in this specific issue, whose outcome depended on the behaviour of the masses, their firmness, and their confidence that they were right and that their cause was just.

On March 10 the National Assembly resolved to move its sitings from Bordeaux to Versailles; reaction had demonstratively set up its headquarters in the former royal residence, 18 kilometres from the walls of revolutionary Paris. Henceforth the two camps stood face to face.

A Parisian who witnessed the events of 1870-1871 left the following account of the situation in Montmartre in the first half of March: "My amazement grew as I passed along these cordoned off narrow streets with their outposts and sentinels, trenches and cannon....

"Everything was in preparation.... This was an almost impregnable position, from where the insurgents would calmly challenge the authorities."¹

Whatever thoughts the bourgeoisie had about it, the Parisian workers were confident that their cause was right and that their

¹ *Journal de Fidus. La Révolution de septembre*, Vol. II, *La Capitulation—La Commune*, Albert Savine, Éditeur, Paris, 1889, pp. 378-79.

demands were legitimate; they had no intention of attacking first, and felt that this would not be to their advantage. However, it was clear to everybody that they would have recourse to force if the least attempt were made to disarm them.

At daybreak on March 18, acting in accordance with a plan drawn up under Thiers' direction, a division of government troops (some 6,000 men) penetrated Montmartre without any particular difficulty. They were under orders to remove the cannon, but for some reason nobody thought of providing horses. While the soldiers were hauling the cannon, housewives, who had got up early to queue for bread, raised the alarm. National Guardsmen streamed out of all the houses. "I was there with the others," recalled Louise Michel, who was the duty messenger that night. "With rifles atilt we charged to the top of the hill, knowing that there we would be met by a whole army.... We were ready to die for freedom, and it seemed that we had wings.... The hill was radiant with light, with the splendid dawn of liberation."¹

The presence of women and even children in this densely populated poor quarter, and chiefly the determination of the Guardsmen, who were impelled by the righteousness of their cause, suddenly affected the government troops. They wavered and then refused to fire into the crowd.

Fraternisation commenced.

General Thomas, who was recognised by the people as one of the butchers of the rising of June 1848, was seized and summarily shot. Shaken, the officers hastily withdrew the troops, but some of the latter joined the columns of demonstrators that were already marching to the Town Hall, singing revolutionary songs.

In Chaumont, Belleville, and other workers' districts, where two government divisions had been sent, the picture was the same. Members of the National Guard CC took over leadership of the movement in their respective districts. At an emergency meeting they drew up a general plan for seizing government buildings. Towards nightfall all the key buildings were occupied.

Meanwhile, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, alarmed by the news that the army and the people were fraternising, Thiers ordered all troops out of the city and the evacuation of government institutions to Versailles. It was his intention to isolate revolutionary Paris, set the rest of France against it, and crush it with the aid of all of the nation's obscurantist and unenlightened elements. Versailles with its National Assembly, ministries, and government gazette became the capital of the counter-revolution.

The Central Committee of the National Guard, the world's first-

¹ Louise Michel, *La Commune*, P.-V. Stock, Éditeur, Paris, 1898, pp. 139-40.

ever proletarian government, supported by an armed people, held a meeting late that night in the Town Hall.

"The proletarians of Paris," declared the *Journal officiel* issued by the victorious workers of Paris,¹ "amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs.... They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power."²

The National Guard CC immediately declared an end to the state of siege, abolished drumhead tribunals, and announced an amnesty for all political prisoners. It regarded its authority as purely provisional and hastened to turn it over to the Commune. "We have chased out the government that betrayed us. Our mandate is now expiring, and we are returning it to you,"³ the CC stated in its address. Elections were set for March 26; everybody was aware that the population would regard any procrastination as deceit.

Within a few days the CC passed a series of resolutions that testified to its proletarian nature: the disbandment of the police and the standing army; the free return of belongings pawned for small sums of money; the deferment of payment of promissory notes and of rents; a reduction of the salaries of civil servants; allowances for needy families.⁴

During these first days, on account of its inexperience, the CC took no steps to consolidate the success of the revolution. Members of the ousted government were allowed to go to Versailles, where they got down to mobilising the forces of counter-revolution; units of government troops and of police likewise went to Versailles unhindered; nothing was done to isolate the royalists, even after their armed demonstration of March 22; no attempt was made to spread the movement throughout the country and march on Versailles as was demanded by some of the more perspicacious revolutionaries—Varlin, Vaillant, Tridon, Jaclard, and also Duval, Eudes, and Moreau.

This unconcern and complacency marking the first steps taken by the workers' government were quite natural after a victory in a short and bloodless battle. It was only experience that could teach relentless severity to a generation brought up on revolutionary traditions

¹ After taking over the editorial offices and printshop of the government newspaper the first workers' government continued publishing it in Paris until May 24. For its part the Versailles government began the publication of a newspaper under the same name on March 19.

² Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 217.

³ *Journal officiel de la Commune*, March 20, 1871. The address was posted on walls on March 19.

⁴ *A History of the Paris Commune of 1871*, Moscow, 1971, p. 260 (in Russian).

but having not received its baptism of fire. The finest fighters of the proletarian army were still entertaining the illusion that the revolution could be consummated peacefully, refused to violate "legality", feared to begin a civil war and did not realise that it had already been started by the reactionary bourgeoisie.

Many eyewitnesses tell of the euphoria of the people of Paris on the day the long-awaited Commune was proclaimed. In an article for the newspaper *Volkswille*, Leo Frankel, a member of the Commune, wrote: "At four o'clock several artillery salvoes announced the opening of the festival. The joy and enthusiasm that had hitherto been reflected only on beaming faces now erupted into an extraordinary cry of jubilation. People waved their hats, National Guardsmen carried their caps on their rifles, and from these crowds and the boundless forest of bayonets—there were nearly 160,000 National Guardsmen—came the thunderous chants of 'Long live the Commune! Long live the Republic!' Military bands played the *Marseillaise*. The sky, which had been overcast, suddenly cleared and the sun's warm rays illumined this unprecedented spectacle. Then the results of the elections were announced."¹

Paris was at last able to hold elections to its Municipal Council, the Paris Commune or, as it was simply called, the Commune. Elected by universal suffrage under the conditions created by a victorious revolution, the *Commune* embodied the free will of the people of Paris.

Because a considerable part of the prosperous residents had left the capital for the provinces as soon as the siege was lifted and also because the elections were boycotted by the bourgeoisie, almost all the members of the Commune were representatives of the working masses. After the small group of deputies elected by the bourgeoisie refused to take their seats in the plebeian assembly, the membership of the Commune consisted of 25 workers, roughly as many artisans and junior employees, and a similar number of members of the liberal professions (including 12 journalists). If it is borne in mind that the latter were mostly working intellectuals, the Commune may be described as an assembly representing the proletariat and the petty-bourgeois working people with a considerable preponderance of workers. In party-political terms this was reflected by the existence of these three main groups. The orientation of this first-ever proletarian state was determined, on the one hand, by the two trends predominant in the French working-class movement (Proudhonism and Blanquism) and, on the other, by the neo-Jacobins, petty-bourgeois democrats with views close to those of the Blanquists.

¹ *The First International and the Paris Commune. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1972, p. 290 (in Russian).

The differences in views on more general and on specific questions of government harboured inevitable divergences, but none of the Commune's members doubted the class, proletarian character of the revolution of March 18, 1871 and of the Commune born of it. "For the proletariat," the Proudhonist Auguste Vermorel wrote, "the revolution of March 18 spelled its assumption of political power, just as the revolution of 1789 did for the bourgeoisie."¹ In its issue of April 25 the Paris revolutionary-democratic newspaper *L'Estafette* likewise underscored the proletarian character of the Commune, writing: "This revolution is defined by the words: assumption of power by the proletariat. This is why such a howl has been raised by that gang in Versailles."

In that decisive hour, when the proletariat of Paris shouldered the national task and took the social initiative into its hands, the urban petty bourgeoisie and its spokesmen—the working intellectuals—acknowledged the leadership of the working class and accepted its slogans and assessments. "Circumstances have given the Commune a national character," the Paris republican newspaper *L'Homme libre* wrote on April 7 in connection with the attack of the Versailles adherents on Paris. "In France the Commune alone personifies law, moderation, and justice. Since madmen have flouted the social contract and started a civil war, it must defend the people's rights." Noting that this was "a life-and-death struggle between the republic and the monarchy, between economic efficiency and waste, between freedom and bondage", the newspaper wrote: "The Commune signifies France's renewal, it signifies progress, it is the great voice of the human conscience that has risen against tyrants and oppressors."

Nor was it disputed that the Commune was a political, governmental authority. "The Commune, and there is no question about it, has received a political mandate ... it dictates to Paris decrees on the abolition of recruitment, on rent, on the abolition of the church budget," the same issue of the paper said.

The political character of the actions taken by the Commune was also seen by Louis Charles Delescluze, a veteran of the republican movement. "Circumstances compelled the Commune to go beyond the normal attributes of municipal councils," he wrote in a letter to the newspaper *Le Reveil du peuple* on April 18. "It has been forced to assume the functions of a government."

All the participants in the Paris revolution believed that its mission was to ensure France's political and social renewal, to establish a just system based on labour, to create a society without monopolies, privileges, or castes. This seemed to be attainable within the framework of the platform which had been recognised by the close of the

¹ *L'Ami du Peuple*, April 24, 1871.

1860s by advanced workers as the minimum programme of the International. However, the experience of Paris and the provinces proved that no bourgeois government would implement that programme. For that reason a workers' government consistently implementing democratic principles was regarded—even if in many cases this was not a conscious realisation—as the most suitable for carrying it out.

The programme for France's renewal allowed for a fairly wide range of interpretations. The term "Commune" was given different meanings. There was a wide variety of views about the scale and even the character of the events. Nonetheless, the differences in assessment receded into the background with the unfolding of a massive popular movement.

In time of revolution, in periods of gigantic exertion of the will and creative ability of the people, ideologies undergo, as we have seen, a certain "levelling" that brings them to a common denominator. All sorts of sectarian socialist patterns and doctrines—utopian and even reactionary—are dissolved in the common mass consciousness, forming an ideological "red alloy", as it were. At such times the worker who only yesterday considered himself chiefly a Blanquist, Proudhonist, or Bakuninist, acts mainly as a proletarian revolutionary determined to assume political power in order to carry forward social reforms; patterns and doctrines are left to the past, and their authors retain their prestige and popularity to the extent they themselves act as direct participants in the revolution. Then comes the moment of awakening: schooled by the experience of the past and the efforts of class organisations, the masses see the sense of their actions. This precisely is the unfailing instinct of an awakened people that Lenin wrote about.¹ But while in June 1848 the ideological "red alloy" determined the mood of only the workers and stood out distinctly against the background of hostility from the non-proletarian classes, in 1871 proletarian ideas captured, for the first time, the imagination of non-proletarian sections of the working population of a large city and the workers acquired allies from amongst these sections.

An analysis of the Paris Commune's programme documents and decrees, and of the pronouncements of its participants brings to light ideas and elements of tactical guidelines that hold an important place in the Marxist system of views. Some of these ideas were developed independently in the collective mind of the Paris proletariat, others were prompted by the International. As regards the practical steps that were taken by the Communards, who without knowing it had acted in accordance with the guiding principles of Marxism, they

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)," *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 133.

were either dictated by the logic of the revolutionary developments or inspired by the experience and traditions of the French working class.

The ability of dedicated revolutionary workers to transcend the limitations of their world outlook and of sectarian doctrines in order to act in the true interests of the proletariat at crucial moments of struggle was noted by Engels. Engels saw this as the explanation of the wonderful fact of "the correctness of much that nevertheless was done by the Commune, composed as it was of Blanquists and Proudhonists".¹

While observing the coincidence of the practice of the Communards with the theory of Marxism, sight must not be lost of the fact that between the former and the latter there is always a qualitative distinction that separates an empirically developed, correct but isolated decision from a coherent system of interrelated views. These momentary, shortlived insights cannot guarantee against a return to former delusions when they do not signal the transition of an individual or even a group to consistent Marxist positions.

Marx hailed the Communards as pioneers of the proletarian revolution and saw their accomplishment in having been the first to *smash the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie* and, at the same time, lay the foundations for the new, proletarian statehood. The Paris workers were not guided by any theoretical considerations. Their creativity was spontaneous,² pushing off directly from the evil reality of the Second Empire. To prevent any return to the past, they sought to chop off the tentacles of the giant state-octopus, which, as was shown in a popular political cartoon of those days, were wound round the living body of France. And yet, although the Proudhonists with their deep-rooted anarchist ideas enjoyed considerable influence in the Commune, it never entered the head of any of them to demand, as was done by Bakunin in Lyons on September 28, 1870, the dismantling of the state machine.

By their decrees the National Guard CC, which acted as the first revolutionary government of Paris, and then the Commune struck one blow after another at the most odious functions of the Bonapartist state. The disbandment of the recruit-based standing army and of the political police, the separation of church and state, the abolition of bureaucratic sinecures, the introduction of elections for official posts and of regulations making officials accountable to the people and subject to recall signified the dismantling of the oppres-

¹ Introduction by Frederick Engels to *The Civil War in France*, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 186.

² Engels defined this creativity as "*instinctive tendencies*" (Engels to Eduard Bernstein, January 1, 1884, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 345).

sive apparatus of the bourgeois state and its replacement, in all its elements, with administrative agencies of an entirely different character.

Virtually all these institutional changes had been demanded in most of the programme documents of the Paris proletarian and democratic organisations during the last years of the empire and on the eve of the Commune, notably in the election platform of the Paris members of the International adopted in 1869. The Communards were the first in history to put them into effect quickly, in a single thrust, with the result that there emerged an entirely new type of socio-political organisation—proletarian statehood. "The Commune..." Lenin wrote, "appears to have replaced the smashed state machine 'only' by fuller democracy.... But as a matter of fact this 'only' signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type.... Democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy."¹

Circumstances cleared the way for the success of the Communards: the standing army's disintegration at a time when there already was a highly organised people's militia—the National Guard. This prompted the decree of March 29 abolishing recruitment and introducing the registration of all able-bodied citizens for service in the National Guard, which was proclaimed the sole legal armed force. The traditional militant anti-clericalism of the Parisian masses compelled the Commune to pass the decree of April 2, separating church and state and making all possessions of the church national property. The government's flight to Versailles and the resultant desertion by ranking officials of almost all the state departments, and the boycott and sabotage by the Bonapartist civil servants remaining in Paris obliged the Commune to make many new appointments, in connection with which 6,000 francs annually was fixed as the maximum salary. In the motivating section of the decree of April 1, recommended by the Finance Commission (of which Varlin was a member), it was stated that its fundamental aim was to put an end to sinecures and the appointment of senior officials as a personal favour.

No objections were raised to this decree and it was passed unanimously.

The abolition of the political police found approval even among many fair-minded bourgeois who had no sympathy whatever for the workers. Practically all departments—post, finance, military, foreign affairs, agriculture, trade, education, health, culture—were abandoned by the big bourgeoisie and had to be reorganised quickly.

The practical actions of the Communards, which Marx called

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 424.

the "destruction of the state machine", were seen by them only as measures most of which were in their programme. But Marx perceived in these actions a universal principle that bore out a conclusion drawn by him in 1852. This concerned the series of legislative and organisational measures to end the oppressive functions of the bourgeois state. Various elements of this series could change, move into prominence, or disappear, depending on the concrete conditions of the given country, but the general law was confirmed. The new element in the Commune's experience was not the magical effect of one or another measure but their massive, revolutionary implementation.

In place of the former ministries and government departments the Commune set up commissions consisting of its own members. The key task of defending the proletarian state and fighting counter-revolution was entrusted to the *Military Commission* and the *Commission for General Security*, which together were charged with protecting the republic's inviolability and keeping the activities of the Versailles government and the behaviour of suspected persons in Paris under surveillance.

The function of the *Finance Commission* was to provide the funds for the maintenance of the other commissions and remould that state budget along entirely new lines, reducing staff and ensuring maximum economy and efficiency in expenditures and easing the tax burden of the people, while instituting an upward tax-rate for the minority, more well-to-do, propertied sections of the population.

The *Justice Commission* was charged with reforming legal procedure as provided for in the 1869 platform, while prior to this reform it had to ensure democracy and equality in the courts.

In addition to drafting a general reform of the education system, the *Commission for Public Education* had the function of providing the premises and personnel in every district for the immediate introduction of universal and free education in schools liberated from the stewardship of the church.

The *Commission for External Relations* had to establish contact with other communes in France and to form them into a federation in a single nation state. Moreover, it had to propagate the Commune's revolutionary principles.

The functions of the *Commission for Labour, Industry and Exchange* covered not only the work of two former ministries—public works and trade; it was faced with an entirely new area of labour legislation and, in addition, charged with the "propagation of socialist doctrines".¹

¹ *Procès-verbaux de la Commune de 1871*, Édition critique par Georges Bourgin, Gabriel Henriot, Tome 1er (Mars-Avril 1871), Editions Ernest Leroux, Paris, 1924, p. 44.

Similarly diverse functions were entrusted to the *Commission for Public Services*, which was formally vested with purely administrative powers: ensurance of the smooth operation of the post, telegraph, water supply, and so forth. Also, it was charged with maintaining contact with the corresponding services in the provinces in order to pass its experience on to them. The extremely important sphere of health services and social insurance also came under its jurisdiction. Lastly, it was charged with fulfilling one of the points of the 1869 platform—studying ways and means of transferring the railways to the communal authorities.

A commission was appointed to handle the *supply of food to the working population of Paris*, which faced the prospect of another siege.

Mainly Blanquists and neo-Jacobins were placed in charge of military affairs, public safety, and external relations. Finances, industry and labour, public services, food supply, and public education were placed in the hands of Proudhonists and members of the International. Engels wrote that “the Proudhonists were chiefly responsible for the economic decrees of the Commune, both for their praiseworthy and their unpraiseworthy aspects; as the Blanquists were for its political commissions and omissions”.¹

The record of the Commune’s sitting of March 29, 1871, published in the press, was in fact the new proletarian power’s first specified programme of action by the state and government. It showed that the Commune justifiably saw concern for the interests of the working population—alongside the defence of the revolution and the propagation of socialist ideas—as its immediate task.

The decree, issued on the same day, on the annulment of rent arrears for nine months (from October 1, 1870, to July 1, 1871), the promise to postpone the repayment of debts under promissory notes (decree of April 18), and also the decision on the gratuitous return to the working people of household items and work tools pawned for small sums of money (this question was substantively studied by a special commission and debated at a sitting of the Commune; the relevant decree was promulgated on May 8, 1871) were seen as a direct indication of this concern.

This was the first-ever action programme of a genuinely democratic government, which made the safeguarding of public interests, notably the defence of the working people’s rights and the satisfaction of their needs, its main concern. The Communards at the helm of power were not noblemen and rhetoricians who remembered the people only when votes were needed at election time, factories had to be manned, and blood had to be shed on the field of battle. The

¹ Introduction by Frederick Engels to *The Civil War in France*, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 186.

Commune members were themselves working people. In the morning they attended sittings of the Commune at which they considered decrees that left a deep imprint in human history, in the course of the day they were in their respective districts where questions of day-to-day life, supplies, housing, and the mobilisation of resources were decided, or at the front line, and in the evening they were again in the Town Hall, where they examined complaints and recommendations and acquainted themselves with the situation in order to discuss it knowledgeably at the next sitting on the following morning.

"Under these difficult conditions," Arthur Arnould, a member of the Commune, subsequently wrote, "when the least error, the least misjudgment could place everything in jeopardy, each of us had to undertake and complete a thousand tasks that could occupy eight or ten people. We did not sleep. Personally I cannot recall having ten nights' rest during these two months. Our rest was a short, frequently interrupted nap in an armchair, on a chair or a bench."¹

Links with the masses were a natural need for the workers' government of Paris. Charles Amouroux, the Secretary of the Commune, felt that the Commune Council could correctly resolve the issues facing it only if its members attended mass rallies. The Commune gave every possible attention to complaints and recommendations from workers. "Daily we receive many verbal or written recommendations from individuals, or adopted in clubs or in sections of the International. These are often excellent suggestions ... and it is up to the Commune Secretariat to take them into account and report on them,"² wrote Henri Brissac, Secretary of the Commune's Executive, proposing the formation of a special commission to handle this important matter.

As early as March 31 the Commune invited workers' societies "to submit in writing to the Commission for Labour and Exchange their considerations and all the observations they feel are useful".³ On the same day it was resolved to set up in each district a subcommission linked to that commission to "adopt joint decisions" on labour demand and supply.⁴

By sending their recommendations to the Commune, the workers of Paris made it clear that they regarded it as the embodiment of their cherished class aspirations. A manifesto released by the Women's Union for the Defence of Paris declared that the "Commune, which

¹ Arthur Arnould, *Histoire populaire et parlementaire de la Commune de Paris*, Tome II, Librairie Socialiste de Henri Kistenaekers, Bruxelles, 1878, pp. 111-12.

² *Procès-verbaux de la Commune de 1871*, Tome 1er, p. 516.

³ *Journal officiel*. April 1, 1871.

⁴ *Ibid.*

represents the international and revolutionary principles of peoples, bears in itself the germ of the social revolution".¹

Alarmed at the deterioration of the Commune's military standing, members of the International's Montrouge section wrote: "In view of the extreme danger overhanging our public institutions ... the members of this section appeal to you, our elected representatives, to rectify this state of affairs."² Soon afterwards the Federal Council of the International set up a special commission with the function of turning over the decisions of the Paris sections to the Commune for debate and endorsement.

Faith in the Commune was strengthened by the fact that its programme was identified with the programme of the International. The Carrières de Montmartre section declared that it sent its recommendations to the Education Commission with the confidence that "the Commune has unequivocally taken the path of the political and social reforms recorded in the preamble to our Statutes".³ This was also the view of members of the united section of Gare d'Ivry and Bercy. On May 20, 1871, they wrote in the newspaper *Le Cri du Peuple*: "...It is not a matter of a simple change of dynasty or the organisation of a purely formal, moderate republic with the preservation of monarchist institutions—on the contrary, the question now is firmly to establish a political order under which all our social demands are implemented."⁴

The influence of the International's ideas and programme was seen in bold relief in the *socio-economic measures taken by the Commune*. Most of these were the result of the work of the Commission for Labour, Industry and Exchange. Leo Frankel, who headed this commission, was guided by the theory of scientific communism and, as far as possible, by advice from Marx.

He was evidently the author of the Commune's decree of April 16, 1871, transferring idle, abandoned enterprises to the cooperative societies set up by the workers formerly employed at them.

By adopting this decree, prompted by the direct requirements of industry—paralysed by sabotage and the flight of the bourgeoisie—the first proletarian state demonstrated its willingness to resolve the question of labour outside the framework of capitalist relations. The working people of Paris correctly understood the socialist tenor of this decree. Some saw it as the realisation of a cherished

¹ *The First International and the Paris Commune*, p. 152; *Journal officiel*, May 8, 1871. The Russian revolutionary Elizaveta Tomanovskaya, who knew Marx well and often benefited by his advice, was one of the founding members and leaders of this union.

² *The First International and the Paris Commune*, p. 155.

³ *Les séances officielles de l'Internationale à Paris pendant le siège et pendant la Commune*, E. Lachaud, Éditeur, Paris, 1872, p. 179.

⁴ *Le Cri du Peuple*, May 20, 1871.

hope—the return of the implements of labour to the worker—and others regarded it as signifying the organisation of cooperatives on a national scale, the idea of which had been put forward at congresses of the International.

The *chambre syndicale* of mechanics responded to the decree with a message to all workers' societies, stating: "For us workers here is a great, long-awaited opportunity to achieve our consolidation and finally translate into practice our patient and laborious studies of the past few years."¹

A message of the *chambre syndicale* of tailors to members of that profession commented: "Never before has a government offered workers such a favourable opportunity. To remain aloof would signify betraying the cause of the emancipation of the proletariat."²

Organisational problems were likewise approached in the spirit of the International's programme: preliminary study to ascertain vacant workshops and the availability of unemployed labour, and also the drawing up of a model cooperative charter. Subcommissions consisting of delegates from the *chambres syndicales* were charged with carrying out the decisions of the Commune.

Frankel took his duties most seriously. "If we manage to reshape social relations radically, the revolution of March 18 will go down in history as the most productive of all previous upheavals,"³ he wrote to Marx on March 30, 1871, asking the latter for advice on the needed social reforms. A decree of April 27, proposed by Frankel, was of vital significance: it banned fines and illegal deductions from wages and put an end to arbitrary practices in the relations between employers and workers. In submitting to the Commune a report of the Commission for Labour, Industry and Exchange on control over contracts signed by military and municipal departments with individual workshops, Frankel insisted on priority for contracts with workers' cooperatives, on the establishment of a minimum wage, and the observance of an eight-hour working day.

Augustin Avrial, a mechanic, was a member of the Commission for Labour, Industry and Exchange, and then, as a former soldier, was appointed chief of artillery materiel. In this capacity he signed on May 3 and presented to the Commune for endorsement a charter drawn up by workers of the Louvre armaments workshops and articulating the principle of workers' control of production for the first time. The charter was printed on May 21, 1871, in one of the last issues of *Journal officiel* published by the Commune.

¹ *The First International and the Paris Commune*, p. 142; *Journal officiel*, April 28, 1871.

² *Le Réveil du Peuple*, April 19, 1871.

³ *The First International and the Paris Commune*, p. 453.

With the participation of the Commission for Labour, Industry and Exchange the Commune passed on April 20 a decree forbidding night work at bakeries.

Of the various demands of the 1869 election platform adopted by the Paris members of the International, the Commune did not, in effect, meet only one—the nationalisation of the bank. Available information on the arguments among the Communards over the bank problem indicates that had the proletarian leaders displayed more determination in this issue they would have been supported by the worker masses but, on the other hand, lost the greater part of their allies among the petty and middle bourgeoisie. The nationalisation of the bank was outside the formal framework of the minimum programme. The Paris petty-bourgeois democrats and radical bourgeois regarded the Commune as a bastion of the republic against monarchist Versailles and were evidently willing to support the proletarian government as long as it met general democratic demands but not when it impinged upon the principle of private ownership.

Regretting that the Communards did not use the fact that the bullion of the French bank was in Paris throughout the civil war as a means of pressuring Versailles, Marx apparently regarded the possibility of seizing it as a measure “compatible with the state of a besieged town”¹: the only options could be to cease the payment of deposits or attach the bank’s property-operations that did not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality and did not signify the planned implementation of a socialist programme. The Communards had a poor knowledge of many of the subtleties of banking and were unable to prevent Versailles obtaining from provincial banks, against the gold reserve in Paris, more than 250 million francs for military operations against the Commune.

A high sense of responsibility for the destiny of citizens who trusted and supported them, and their concern for the welfare of the people induced the Communards to take steps that naturally strengthened the *alliance of the working class with non-proletarian sections of the working people*. However, this concern was almost exclusively for urban strata, whose needs and anxieties were known to them. Having no theory to go by and hampered by their urbanist views, only a few could see beyond the traditional bias of the city-dweller against the rural inhabitant, of the wageworker against the peasant proprietor. The agrarian programme of the International, which was only just being drawn up by its sections in Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany, did not reach the French workers at the time. Some

¹ Karl Marx, “The Civil War in France”, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 227; Marx to Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, February 22, 1881, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 318.

attempts to appeal to the countryside, made by the Communards and dictated by practical considerations, namely, to enlist the assistance of the peasants (this was in keeping with the resolution of the International's Basle Congress on contacts with the peasants), did not yield any practical results, especially as the Versailles authorities had set up barriers to contacts between Paris and the rural workers. Lack of support from the peasants was one of the reasons of the Paris Commune's weakness and isolation, and, in the long run, defeat.

Marx wrote highly of the Commune's concern for safeguarding the alliance of the workers with the petty and, partly, the middle bourgeoisie of Paris. He said that the decree on rents and on the postponement of the repayment of promissory notes was a masterly step. Regarding the decree of April 16, he wrote that the Commune acted "very wisely" by appointing an elected commission to "inquire into the ways of handing over the deserted workshops and manufactures to co-operative workmen's societies with some indemnity for the capitalist deserters".¹

It was Marx's opinion that steps of this kind had to be taken to bring the Commune the support of the peasants oppressed by hypothecary indebtedness. Of course, there could be no question of declaring the nationalisation of mortgages (a step which, under other circumstances, Marx and Engels regarded possible and useful) from besieged Paris. Lenin had this in mind when he wrote that "the Commune could not immediately offer... land to the peasants".² Marx strongly recommended that the Commune should pass a decree promising the peasants a postponement on the payment of mortgages. Despite the efforts made by Auguste Serrailier, the General Council's representative in Paris, this recommendation of Marx's was not understood by the Communards: they saw no distinction between mortgages, as a specific form of capitalist exploitation of the toiling peasants in France, and ordinary commercial debt.

The Paris Commune was not destined to have the time for giving full rein to the socialist trend implicit in it as a proletarian government. With a sudden attack on the National Guard's outposts at the Neuilly bridge on April 2, Versailles unleashed a civil war. All the forces of the new proletarian state, all the attention of its leaders had now to be concentrated on military problems.³ But this required a *centralised state power*, for which the system of administration adopted by the Paris Commune on March 29 made no provision.

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, pp. 138-39.

² V. I. Lenin, "On Compromises", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 312-13.

³ This is considered at length in *The Paris Commune of 1871*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1961, pp. 184-231 (in Russian).

The Proudhonists' fear of any form of dictatorship and inability to ensure the sovereign rights of the Commune prevented the formation of a strong revolutionary government, on which the Blanquists insisted. It took the adherents of a communal system and direct rule by the people time to see that due to the absence of an agency expressing and carrying out the collective class will of the Commune, its sovereignty, ensured by the coupling of legislative and executive power, was in fact annulled by the clash of innumerable individual persuasions and views. Moreover, even the left Proudhonists, who increasingly saw the need for strengthening the revolutionary power, were disturbed by the closeness of non-proletarian elements (the neo-Jacobins) to the Blanquists. From the outset fundamental differences flared up in the Commune over the question of the tasks and methods of revolutionary rule, differences that eventually led to a split between the Proudhonists, who were in the minority, and the Blanquists, who comprised a so-called majority together with the neo-Jacobins.

The functions of the Executive, formed on March 29, were confined to monitoring the fulfilment of the resolutions passed by the Commune and its commissions; it could do nothing independently. The Blanquists in it (Émile Victor Duval, Émile Eudes, Edme-Marie Gustave Tridon, and Edouard Vaillant) endeavoured to extend its powers. On April 20 the Executive was revamped: it now included a representative from each of the nine governmental commissions; temporarily vested with full executive powers, the latter had daily to endorse the decisions drawn up in the different commissions, giving them the force of laws, and every evening they had to give an account of their work at a closed plenary sitting of the Commune. Although it was welcomed by the two sides, this new form of organisation satisfied nobody. Military affairs were hopelessly tangled. The repeated change of military leaders (Jules Bergeret, Gustave Paul Cluseret, Louis Rossel) and the ascertaining of the extent of their responsibility for setbacks consumed much of the Commune's time. Everything was compounded by parallelism and rivalry between the Military Commission, the National Guard command, and the old Central Committee of the National Guard, which continued to function even after the persons elected to the Commune (more than half) had dropped out of its composition.

On May 1 the Commune passed a neo-Jacobin-sponsored resolution by 45 votes against 23 on the formation of a Committee of Public Safety vested with broad powers and responsible only to it. This Committee included the Blanquists Antoine Arno and Gabriel Ranvier and three neo-Jacobins (one of whom was Félix Pyat). Differences steadily widened between the majority, which conducted separate meetings and increasingly ignored the plenary sittings of

the Commune, and the minority, which assessed the election of the Committee as a usurpation of its rights. On May 15 delegates of the minority went to the plenary sitting with the intention of submitting a declaration of their decision to leave the Commune and return to their districts. Since the majority did not appear, the declaration was turned over to the press.

The news of the split in the Commune dismayed the Paris workers and was magnified by the hostile press. The stand taken by the minority was censured by the Commune's newspapers, which wrote that it was breaking the revolutionary unity of the people of Paris. The International's Federal Council and a meeting of electors of District IV urged the delegates to resume their seats in the Commune. Many members of the minority heeded these voices. The unity of the working class was restored at the barricades, at which members of the minority and the majority displayed equal heroism against the Versailles forces that had entered Paris.

Bloody Week began on May 21. During these last days of the Commune the proletariat demonstrated the finest features endowed to it by history. For its part, the bourgeoisie displayed unparalleled brutality, which it justified with references to justice and legality (any means for defending the capitalist system and private property were regarded legal): mass murder became common; there were thousands of cases of personal vengeance, and these fused into a single common act—class vengeance, the hypocrisy of the butchers who proclaimed themselves the saviours of society while annihilating its flower and slandering disarmed, sentenced, and fallen fighters. All these features and inclinations of the bourgeoisie, which were seen clearly in June 1848, grew more pronounced in May 1871. It could not have been otherwise: the bourgeoisie now saw a much greater threat.

Thiers personally directed the training of the army that was to take Paris. From the outset this was a punitive army. The 12,000 troops that he led out of Paris on March 18 were isolated in the Satory camp, given large rations, and rewarded with bonuses. Under the terms of the armistice signed with the Prussians, only 40,000 French troops could be stationed in the Paris zone. But with Bismarck's blessing, there were 130,000 troops in Versailles by April 16, and these were soon joined by another 170,000 soldiers of the army of Napoleon III released from German captivity together with Bonapartist generals; they were eager to square accounts with the people for September 4.

In addition to returning prisoners of war, in violation of the armistice terms the Commune's Commission for External Relations had pledged to observe, Bismarck allowed the Versailles forces to march across the neutral zone to the north and east of Paris, cut off the

Northern Railway, set up a cordon running from the Marne to Montreuil, an eastern suburb of Paris, and deployed 5,000 soldiers and 80 pieces of artillery at Vincennes to prevent the Commune's defenders from leaving the city. "That after the most tremendous war of modern times," Marx wrote, "the conquering and the conquered hosts should fraternise for the common massacre of the proletariat—this unparalleled event does indicate, not, as Bismarck thinks, the final repression of a new society upheaving, but the crumbling into dust of bourgeois society."¹

Unleashed on April 2, the civil war was in fact the second siege of Paris. Forts fell one after another under artillery bombardment, giving the Versailles forces access to the city's fortifications and gates.

On Sunday, May 21, at a signal from a traitor, the Versailles troops penetrated the St. Cloud gate and occupied the adjoining fortifications, where they regrouped for a further advance. General Jaroslaw Dabrowski, commander of the Paris fortified area, futilely requested reinforcements in order to drive them out. The Commune was occupied with the trial of General Cluseret, a military delegate accused of treachery: on the central sector of the front many bastions were unmanned. Meanwhile, Versailles troops were infiltrating the district of sumptuous mansions and landscaped villas. The first massacres of working people commenced. Every person wearing a blouse was regarded as a Communard. The mechanic Adolphe Alphonse Assi, a Commune member sent by the Committee of Public Safety to ascertain the situation, was taken prisoner.

On Monday, May 22, the Versailles troops seized the Auteil, Passy, Sevres, and Versailles gates and set up a battery in Étoile Square. They were now in control of Districts XV and XVI. The workers of Paris learned of this. Louis Charles Delescluze, who on May 10 had been appointed to head the Commune's Military Department, called upon the citizens of Paris to man the barricades. The western part of the city was in the hands of the Versailles troops: 130,000 (12 divisions) were already there. The workers' quarter of Batignolles put up a heroic resistance, but the Germans let a division through the neutral zone and it captured the barricades from the rear. The Communards entrenched themselves near the Concorde Square, on St. Genevieve Hill, courageously holding the enemy at bay. In congratulating his generals in the National Assembly, Thiers declared: "The expiation will be complete. It will be achieved in the name, by means, and with the help of the law."²

¹ Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 240.

² Bernard Noël, *Dictionnaire de la Commune*, Fernand Hazan, Éditeur. Paris, 1971, p. 338.

On Tuesday, May 23, the Commune issued a proclamation in which it vainly called upon the Versailles troops to fraternise, reminding them of March 18; the only cases in which the troops stopped shooting were when they gave the wounded the *coup de grâce* with the butts of their rifles. They occupied the *quartier de l'Opéra*, captured the Montmartre heights, and shot down prisoners en masse. Dabrowski was killed. The first fires broke out that night.

On Wednesday, May 24, the Commune members abandoned the Town Hall. The Versailles troops occupied the district of the Louvre and the embankments of the Seine. The gunpowder depot in the Luxembourg Palace was blown up, leaving the Communards without munitions. The Versailles troops shot several hundred prisoners in the vicinity of the Panthéon, Raoul Rigault, the Procurator-General of the Commune, among them. On that day Theophile Ferré, one of the Commune leaders and delegate of the Security Commission, signed the first-ever order on the execution of six hostages—Archbishop Darboy and five priests.

On Thursday, May 25, a detachment of Communards under General Walery Wróblewski held the last beachhead on the left bank of the Seine, stemming the advance of the Versailles troops. Ferocious shelling compelled this detachment to retreat to the Bastille. Fierce fighting took place in Districts III, IV, and XI. That evening Delescluze was mortally wounded on the barricades in the boulevard Voltaire. "I cannot and shall not be a victim and toy of victorious reaction,"¹ he wrote to his sister in a note of farewell.

On Friday, May 26, the Commune and the Committee of Public Safety were no longer in existence. Resistance headed by Louis Eugène Varlin was concentrated in the vicinity of the Bastille and La Villette. The Versailles troops butchered the wounded in the hospitals. The Communards killed 50 hostages in the rue Haxo. From the Chaumont heights and the Père Lachaise cemetery the Communards fired their last shell at the Versailles troops. The journalist Jean Baptiste Millière was shot on the steps of the Panthéon: he was not a member of the Commune and held no official post; his murder was the personal vengeance of the Versailles Minister Jules Favre, whose dirty dealings Millière had exposed in the press.

On Saturday, May 27, the Versailles troops attacked Belleville. For a few hours the Communards held firm in the Père Lachaise cemetery. There was hand-to-hand fighting amid the gravestones. Communards were executed at a wall which was later named after them.

On Sunday, May 28, the last barricade—in the rue Ramponneau—

¹ Marcel Dessal, *Un révolutionnaire jacobin. Charles Delescluze, 1809-1871*, Librairie Marcel Rivière et C^{ie}, Paris, 1952, p. 408.

ceased fire at midday. The Versailles troops shot prisoners, including Varlin. Reaction rejoiced.

Official statistics indicate that the Paris Municipal Council paid for the burial of 17,000 executed people. Archives contain evidence that 40,000 Communards were arrested (four times more than after the events of June 1848). Of these some 10,000 were sentenced by military tribunals to hard labour, imprisonment in fortresses, or exile to New Caledonia.

According to a survey of industry conducted by the municipal authorities of Paris, the working population of Paris had decreased within a single year by 100,000 "worker units" by October 1, 1871.¹

* * *

The main reason for the defeat of the Paris Commune was ultimately the fact that by the 1870s capitalist development had not reached a sufficiently high level not only in France but in the world as a whole.² This factor accounted for the predominance of small-scale production in Paris and, as a consequence, the viability of petty-bourgeois influences among the workers. Out of this sprang the ideological and organisational unpreparedness of the French proletariat, and the absence of a proletarian party, of an advanced contingent armed with a scientific theory and class programme. This accounted for the errors committed by the Communards: their tactics of defence, the irresolution of the political and military leadership, the vacillation in the struggle against the counter-revolution, and the misconceived attitude to the bank.

The Commune's isolation, the absence of support from the workers and republican bourgeoisie of other cities, and inability of the Paris revolutionaries to overcome the hostility of the peasants, who were not aware at the time that their interests coincided with those of the workers, were another essential reason behind the defeat of the Commune.

Although the triumph of the heroic workers of Paris, who ventured to "storm heaven" (Marx), was shortlived, it ushered in the transition of the international working-class movement to a new, higher stage. "Whatever the immediate outcome may be," Marx wrote on April 17, 1871, "a new point of departure of world-wide importance has

¹ A communique on the losses suffered by the Versailles forces stated that 83 officers and 794 soldiers were killed, 430 officers and 6,024 soldiers were wounded, and 183 troops were listed as missing.

² Introduction by Frederick Engels to *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 493; V. I. Lenin, "In Memory of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 141.

been gained."¹ When the Versailles murderers were running amok in Paris and the barricades were falling one after another, Marx said in a speech to members of the First International's General Council on May 23: "The principles of the Commune were eternal and could not be crushed; they would assert themselves again and again until the working classes were emancipated."²

Lenin called the Paris Commune one of the "great proletarian revolutions"³; in considering the reasons for its defeat he, like Marx, noted that "there are moments in history when a desperate struggle of the *masses*, even for a hopeless cause, is *essential* for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the *next* struggle".⁴

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PARIS COMMUNE

Created by the Paris workers, who were impelled by class solidarity, the Commune acted from the outset under the banner of proletarian internationalism. This was seen not only in its declarations and appeals, in which the old calls for the brotherhood of nations and for a world socialist republic were given an entirely new, realistic content. Its internationalism was objective. In carrying out a specific national task (the overthrow of the anti-people, traitor government) from class positions (the overthrow of bourgeois rule generally), the Paris workers acted in the interests of the entire international proletariat, paving the way to and, as it were, looking into its future.

Advanced workers in all countries instinctively sensed this feature of the revolution of March 18, and there was an immediate response to it in their hearts. Wherever a working-class movement existed and wherever it was only taking shape, solidarity with the victorious proletariat was spontaneously shown as soon as the first news of the events in Paris was received. Reinforced faith in the strength of the working class, pride in its valiant sons, and the hope for the proletariat's final triumph resounded in speeches at spontaneous meetings and rallies and in appeals and resolutions.

While it took the European proletariat years to appreciate the significance of the rising of June 1848 as an action by advanced workers, Marx noted, the "Paris Commune was at once acclaimed

¹ Marx to L. Kugelmann, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 422.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 238.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 436.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of Karl Marx's Letters to Dr. Kugelmann", *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, pp. 111-12.

by the universal proletariat".¹ Marx attributed this to the work of the International, which helped the proletariat to acquire a class consciousness quicker.²

In order to isolate the Commune from the international proletariat, the Versailles government instructed local authorities to cut Paris off from the rest of the world. In mid-April 1871 Marx wrote of the "*wall of lies*" erected by Thiers around the revolutionary capital in order to keep the provinces in subjugation and "prevent their general rising for Paris".³ In this situation it was important that accurate information should reach the workers of France and other countries about the proletarian state and the course of the hostilities that were started against it on April 2 by Versailles.

This was the function of the Commune's Commission for External Relations headed by the publicist Pascal Grousset. Prosper Olivier Lissagaray later deplored the Commission's inaction, saying that it evidently gave most of its attention to diplomatic relations with bourgeois states, disregarding the task of spreading the ideas of the Commune among the population of the French countryside and appealing directly to workers of other countries. "This delegation (commission.—*Ed.*), created only for the exterior," he wrote, "entirely forgot the rest of the world. Throughout all Europe the working-classes eagerly awaited news from Paris, were in their hearts fellow-combatants of the great town, now become their capital, multiplied their meetings, processions, and addresses. Their papers, poor for the most part, courageously struggled against the calumnies of the bourgeois press. The duty of the delegation was to hold out a hand to these priceless auxiliaries: it did nothing."⁴

The London-based General Council of the International, headed by Marx and Engels, was a centre mobilising working-class and public support for the Paris revolution so that if defeat could not be avoided it should cost as few sacrifices and lost positions as possible. Support for the first proletarian state, the struggle against slander in the bourgeois press, which misrepresented the documents of the Commune and distorted the meaning of its principles and actions, became the immediate task of the advanced contingent of the workers of all countries, of the members of the International. To disseminate accurate information about what was taking place in Paris, the organisational network formed by the International during the preceding six years was mobilised and use was made of the links

¹ *The General Council of the First International, 1871-1872, Minutes*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 462.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Prosper Olivier Lissagaray, *History of the Commune of 1871*, pp. 228-29.

with its federal councils and local sections, with their leaders and press. "In secretaries' letters to sections on the continent and in the United States, the true character of this great revolution in Paris was explained to the workers,"¹ Marx wrote to Frankel.

Marx's personal contribution to the defence of the Commune was inestimable. He fought for it as "*a participant* in the mass struggle, to which he reacted with all his characteristic ardour and passion".² He closely followed the course of events, each step taken in the camp of reaction, striving to lay bare the secret plans of Thiers and Bismarck, to bring to light what they were in fact plotting. He advised the Commune on the tactics of leadership and on military operations, and provided it with information which might be useful to it and which was accessible to him in London from the world press and his extensive contacts in diverse circles. We still know very little about this advice, which was in most cases passed on verbally to the leaders of proletarian Paris. In parallel, Marx personally headed the broad movement of solidarity of the proletarians of all countries with the Paris Commune, directing it into the needed channel.

This movement sprang from the mass campaigns in support of the strike struggle, against militarism and wars of aggrandisement. These campaigns had been conducted by the International's sections in Europe and America in 1865-1870. Compared with these campaigns, the movement of solidarity with the Commune was larger in scale, more organised, and permeated with a more profound understanding of proletarian internationalism; being a reflection of the general revolutionary crisis that European society was going through at the time, it was also more energetic politically.

The circumstance that in face of the proletarian Commune all the governments were representative of reaction, allies and accomplices of Thiers, gave the 1871 solidarity movement of European and American workers a new noteworthy feature. By acting in defence of the first-ever proletarian state, the workers became inevitably involved in a direct confrontation with the governments of their own countries, and took the path of open revolutionary actions.

Depending on local conditions, the situation, operating legislation, the extent of democratic freedoms, whether or not there was a police regime, and so on, the struggle in support of the Commune acquired the most diverse forms in the various countries. However,

¹ Marx an Leo Frankel, um den 26. April 1871, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 217.

² V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of Karl Marx's Letters to Dr. Kugelmann", *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1962, p. 110.

in all countries workers' action promoted the growth of proletarian class consciousness and organisation, the strengthening of the workers' press, and the invigoration of the strike struggle for workers' social and political demands. Everywhere these actions powerfully influenced all aspects of the working-class movement that accentuated the class character of that movement.

The German workers, acting under the leadership of a revolutionary Social-Democratic Party, were in the vanguard of the solidarity movement. In the German parliament on May 26, during Bloody Week, August Bebel denounced the assistance that Bismarck was extending to the Thiers government and pledged fidelity to the cause of the Commune. The party newspaper *Volksstaat*, despite continuous imposition of fines and the confiscations of its issues, courageously supported the Communards, expounding the substance of their actions and refuting the slanderous inventions of the reactionary German press. Cautioned that it would be immediately disbanded if any mention were made of the Commune, the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party indirectly expressed its attitude to the Paris revolution, stating its total solidarity with the reports on political and social issues of the past year in its newspaper.

In spite of brutal police persecution the workers of multinational Austria-Hungary came forward in defence of the Commune. On April 8, 1871, the Viennese workers' newspaper *Volkswille* published a letter from Paris in which Frankel wrote of the formal proclamation of the Commune. This issue was arrested but the typesetters secretly removed and circulated almost the entire edition. Acting against a police ban, the Hungarian workers held a rally in Pest to mourn the fall of the Commune. Delegates arrived from Vienna and Prague, and the procession marched to the building housing a workers' union. Many of the participants were taken into custody and tried, while the union itself was dissolved.

In England the propaganda in support of the Commune was conducted chiefly by members of the General Council; they spoke at meetings and rallies and wrote regularly of the Paris events in workers' and democratic newspapers. Under the impact of the revolution of March 18 a left wing upholding the idea of a social republic was formed in the republican movement, which became active after France was proclaimed a republic on September 4. A message to the Commune and all the workers of Paris—to the "pioneers and builders of a better social system"—was adopted on April 16 at a mass rally in Hyde Park. This message was read at a sitting of the Commune and published in the *Journal officiel* on April 20.

By early June 1871 the British workers and bourgeois radicals had mobilised public opinion against the Thiers government's demand for the extradition of Communards as criminals to the extent that

the Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone turned down Versailles' request.

The Swiss members of the International, who had their own workers' press and enjoyed freedom of speech, were able to write off the Commune with relatively little hindrance. By organising a wide protest movement they, too, prevented the extradition of Communards.

The Swiss workers were the only contingent of the international proletariat to make an attempt to extend effective, practical assistance to the Commune. The heads of the International's Geneva sections, including Johann Philipp Becker, Henri Perret, and Nikolai Utin, set up a secret committee, contacted Lyons and Paris, printed appeals, formed armed detachments, and intended to act in support of the revolutionary movement in the south of France. The swift suppression of the movement in Lyons (March 24), Saint-Étienne (March 27), Creusot (March 28), Narbonne (March 31), and Marseilles (April 4) deprived the insurgents of their principal strong points. "Had we had a little more money in March and April," Becker wrote, "we would have roused the whole of Southern France and thereby saved the Paris Commune."¹

In North America the movement of solidarity commenced somewhat later than in Europe, but there, too, the workers' actions in defence of the cause and ideas of the Commune were accompanied by demands for an eight-hour working day and equality for blacks.

In economically less developed countries, where the working-class movement was still in its infancy, solidarity with the Paris Commune, defence of its gains, and the dissemination of its experience helped to draw the proletarians into the great international army of labour, into the sphere of the International's influence. In these countries most of the authors of the first appeals and organisers of the first solidarity rallies were not workers but members of the working intelligentsia, socialism-oriented "proletarians by brain", revolutionary democrats.

In Russia, for example, proclamations secretly put out by a St. Petersburg student N. P. Goncharov in April and May 1871 were a direct response to the Paris revolution of March 18. Declaring that the "world revolution has begun" and that "it will spread to all the capitals of the world", Goncharov urged revolutionary young people in Russia to prepare for the moment the revolution came to Russia from the walls of Paris. "Respond, honest people," he wrote in his last leaflet (May 14), "respond wherever you may be to perishing Paris so that as it dies it should know that its cause will be taken up

¹ *The First International and the Paris Commune*, p. 544.

and carried forward as courageously and heroically as it itself has done."¹

A striking manifestation of the Commune's international character, which sprang from its substance as a government of the working people, was the direct participation in its struggle against Versailles by many foreigners alongside the workers of Paris and people from other departments of France. Proletarian revolutionaries, revolutionary democrats, and Socialists of different countries, who found themselves in Paris on March 18 or had come specially to take their place at its barricades, realised that the destiny of the international revolution was at stake, that this was a struggle for a better future for humanity. Frankel, Dabrowski, and Wróblewski were not the only foreigners whose names are associated in perpetuity with the Commune. Among the defenders of the Commune a place of honour is held by members of Russian revolutionary democracy, of Russian socialist thought.

Elizaveta Tomanovskaya, a member of the Russian section of the First International, is known (by the name Eliza Dmitrieva) as a founding member and leader of the Women's Union for the Defence of Paris. Evidently acting on Marx's advice (she went to Paris from London), Tomanovskaya drew many thousands of women into the vigorous activity of that centralised organisation. She corresponded with Marx, keeping him informed of developments in insurgent Paris. During "May Week", Tomanovskaya and Louise Michel commanded a battalion, displaying miracles of courage. A. V. Korvin-Krukovskaya, sister of the distinguished Russian mathematician Sofia Kovalevskaya, was in Paris from the autumn of 1870 onwards and conducted extensive organisational and propaganda work. Together with her husband, Charles Victor Jacklard, she fought at the barricades to the last, defending the Commune.² M. P. Sazhin (Arm and Ross) likewise fought at the barricades; he came from Zurich as soon as he learned of the Commune's proclamation. Another Russian revolutionary, V. A. Potapenko, was adjutant to General Dabrowski, with whom he stayed to the last minute.

P. L. Lavrov, who resided in Paris from the winter of 1870/71 onwards, gave the Commune his wholehearted support. As early as March 21 he sent a Brussels workers' newspaper a report in which he articulated the wish for the "victory of this republic, which has indeed come out of the people and been founded by workers who only want justice and brotherhood". In another report, on the elec-

¹ B. S. Itenberg, *Russia and the Paris Commune*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 142-44 (in Russian).

² I. S. Knizhnik-Vetrov, *Russian Women in the First International and the Paris Commune*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1964, pp. 84-85; S. S. Volk, *Karl Marx and Russian Civic Personalities*, Leningrad, 1969, pp. 93-98 (both in Russian).

tions to the Commune, Lavrov wrote that it was a victory "of the proletarians, upright and calm in their strength, over all the demoralised forces of bourgeois society".¹ In early April, firmly believing that the new power was durable, Lavrov wrote a letter to the Commune in which alongside considerations about a reform of the public education system, he outlined a plan for extra-school classes for adult workers in order to train them for the political and administrative duties delegated to them by the new power. At the close of April Lavrov left Paris, travelling via Brussels to London, where he joined in the far-flung movement of solidarity with the Commune directed by Marx and Engels.

After the Commune fell, one of the orientations of the mass solidarity movement in all countries was the defence of the rights of emigre Communards, the provision of housing, food, and work for them. This direct fraternal assistance was handled by the General Council and the local sections of the International.

Concern for the destiny of the Communards was accompanied by speeches at workers' rallies and by contributions to the workers' press: against the plans to extradite foreigners (in England), for the observance of the traditional right of political asylum (in Switzerland), for freedom of speech and assembly (in Germany), for freedom of the press (in Austria-Hungary), and for equal rights for blacks (in the USA).

* * *

Although more than a hundred years have passed, the experience and lessons of the Paris Commune continue to hold a prominent place in the ideological treasure-store of the international working-class movement and play a major role in the ideological struggle over fundamental issues of the revolutionary process of the twentieth century. This is not surprising because all problems of any significance for the triumph of the socialist revolution are in one way or another linked with the Commune. The Commune's achievements and even its mistakes, inconsistency, and blunders continue to help the parties of the working class to chart the optimal strategy and tactics. Although the conditions for the struggle of the proletariat kept changing radically with the passage of time and blind copying of the Commune's experience can bring no benefit, the basic elements of this experience retain their universal importance for the entire period of revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism.

This was Lenin's approach to the ideological heritage of the Paris

¹ B. S. Itenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.

Commune. For him this heritage served as the theoretical mainstay for the implementation of key tasks of the revolutionary struggle and the basis for conclusions that contributed inestimably to the development of Marxism. He used the example of the Paris Commune most frequently and productively in periods linked to the greatest class battles in Russia (and thereby in the world)—the revolution of 1905-1907, the revolutions of February and October 1917, and the commencement of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. These were also periods of maximum tension in the ideological struggle in the working-class movement between consistent Marxists and opportunists, a struggle in which the latter misrepresented the Commune's experience and used this misrepresentation in an effort to substantiate their refusal to join in preparations for the socialist revolution. This was the line followed at the close of the nineteenth century by the revisionists and later, during the First World War, by Kautsky and his supporters; "leftist", anarchist, and other elements sought to appropriate the ideological heritage of the Commune.

Lenin proved the untenability of all claims of this kind and showed the significance of the Commune as the first-ever state of a new type—the proletarian state—as "a great example of how to combine initiative, independence, freedom of action and vigour from below with voluntary centralism free from stereotyped forms".¹ In substantive analyses of the lessons of the Commune Lenin concentrated on the question of proletarian leadership of the revolution, stressing that such leadership could be durable and consistent only if the working class had a militant Marxist party. He saw the absence of such a party as an essential reason for the Commune's fall.² This conclusion was decisive for the prospects of the working-class movement in Russia, where Lenin founded a revolutionary party, a new type of party capable of heading the working class in the struggle for the overthrow of bourgeois rule and the establishment of the power of the working class and its allies expressing the democratic aspirations of the working people.³

With this is closely linked another conclusion from the experience

¹ V. I. Lenin, "How to Organise Competition?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 413.

² V. I. Lenin, "Plan of a Lecture on the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 208; "Lessons of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 477; "In Memory of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 141.

³ "The Commune of Paris," wrote Jacques Duclos, who was a member of the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party, "was a government of proletarian dictatorship. As Lenin showed in *The State and Revolution*, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a form of democracy superior to bourgeois democracy" (Jacques Duclos, *A l'assaut du ciel. La Commune de Paris annonciatrice d'un monde nouveau*, Editions Sociales, Paris, 1961, p. 314).

of the Commune, namely, that the proletariat has to win mass allies, chiefly the peasants. The question of allies is the keynote of all of Lenin's pronouncements on the Commune. For Lenin the Commune's failure to reach understanding with the peasant masses was one of the points of departure in formulating the question of the importance of the proletariat's alliance with the peasants at the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist stages of the revolution.

On the eve of the October Revolution, when the task of assuming power confronted the proletariat of Russia, Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution* in which he made an unsurpassed analysis of the Commune's experience of smashing the military-bureaucratic machine of the bourgeoisie, a question that has been most grossly misrepresented in the writings of reformist and centrist leaders, notably Karl Kautsky, whose theses were witheringly criticised by Lenin. After the October Revolution Lenin used the lessons of the Commune for building a new life. At this stage, too, he upheld the true lessons of the Commune against the falsifications of the Kautskyites, who distorted them, counterposing the Bolsheviks, proponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the Paris Communards as having allegedly propounded "pure", supra-class democracy. These fabrications were refuted by Lenin in, among others, his work *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918).

In subsequent decades as well, these issues (as some others) remained the subject of a sharp polemic between spokesmen of different currents in the international working-class movement. The topicality of the Commune's experience and lessons and their significance as a factor of the present-day ideological struggle were most strikingly demonstrated on the Commune's centenary, which was marked by progressives throughout the world in 1971. The unceasing attempts to appropriate the Commune or undermine its significance "precisely by circles that have contempt for and strive to deceive the people"¹ were noted in a special issue of the theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, and also at an international scientific conference sponsored by the Maurice Thorez Institute in Paris in May 1971, and an international theoretical conference in Prague. At these conferences it was stated that the ideological heritage of the Commune had become a demarcation line separating consistent Marxists-Leninists from opportunists.² The right opportunists and revisionists dispute the continuity of the Commune's revolutionary traditions, deny its substance as the po-

¹ *Cahiers du communisme*, March 1971, p. 22.

² *World Marxist Review*, February 1971, pp. 1-13; *Voici l'aube. L'immortelle Commune de Paris*, pp. 54-55, 235.

litical power of the proletariat, and accentuate its mistakes; the "lefts" canonise some specifically local features of the Commune and counterpose them to the principles of creative Marxism-Leninism.

The records of the centenary fora and subsequent works by Marxists in the USSR, France, and other countries convincingly refute these (and analogous) versions, which misrepresent the substance and historical significance of that event.

To return to the days of the Commune itself, it must be noted that the task of championing the fundamental positions won by the Paris Communards and understanding the Commune's experience confronted the international proletarian organisation as soon as the Commune was defeated.

The principal role in fulfilling this task fell to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Chapter 4

LESSONS OF THE PARIS COMMUNE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST THEORY. THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL IN THE 1870s

SCIENTIFIC VIEW OF THE PEOPLE'S HISTORICAL CREATIVE GENIUS

The Paris Commune provided lessons of inestimable significance for the further development of Marxism, the proletariat's revolutionary theory. The innovatory experience of the Communards produced inexhaustible material for generalisation, and all the subsequent writings of Marx and Engels were linked in one way or another, directly or indirectly, to the Commune, to the problems and ideas it had brought to life.

The appeal of the International's General Council, *The Civil War in France* (written by Marx), was the major document presenting the first-ever analysis of the basic problems raised by the rise, existence, and fall of the first proletarian dictatorship.

The Commune had only just fallen, and many of its militants had died at its barricades. Over the fresh graves of the Communards, frequently in their own words, Marx showed the true substance of what they had accomplished, about which they themselves might have only surmised. In the face of unbridled reaction intoxicated with victory Marx stood up for the vanquished, who had not spared their lives in the name of a better future for humankind.

The task that Marx set himself was to turn the spontaneous sympathy for the Commune into a conscious striving on the part of the proletarian masses to complete its work. In *The Civil War in France* his point of departure was that the lessons of the first proletarian dictatorship had made the workers more conscious of themselves as a class, more prepared to accept Marxism, and more eager to find the answers to fundamental problems of the proletarian movement.

The events in Paris bore out the conclusion, drawn by Marx and Engels in 1848-1849, that the proletariat would play the decisive part in the coming revolution. In alliance with the working masses it would undertake democratic tasks whose consistent, revolutionary fulfilment would evolve into a settlement of the principal antagon-

ism generated by the capitalist mode of production. The conclusion that the struggle for the class aims of the proletariat in combination with the struggle for democracy is a basic condition of success constitutes one of the key lessons of the Commune, a lesson that was clearly brought to light by Marx and Engels.

In *The Civil War in France* and later works, Marx and Engels used the Commune's experience to continue their substantiation and development of the theory of the socialist revolution. In Engels' articles of the series *Notes of the War*, Marx's *Outlines of "The Civil War in France"*, and in the latter work itself the founders of Marxism revealed many of the factors that led to the revolution in Paris: the degradation of the ruling elite, the breakdown of the old machinery of state, chiefly of the army, the cowardice of the bourgeoisie, its inability to administer the nation, its betrayal of national interests, the drastic deterioration of the working people's condition, the spontaneous organisation and growing militancy of the masses, mainly of the workers, and, lastly, the fact that the masses were armed. Moreover, in *The Civil War in France* it is shown that what ultimately brought the Commune to life was not the specific situation in Paris but the general laws governing the evolution of class contradictions, which had come to a head at precisely that moment. In amplifying these propositions against the background of subsequent lessons of the revolutionary struggle, Lenin developed a coherent teaching on the revolutionary situation.

Marx's analysis of the events in Paris after March 18, 1871, brought him round to the conclusion that that was a genuine people's revolution, in which the masses remained in control of the situation after victory. In *Outlines of "The Civil War in France"* he wrote: "That the Revolution is made *in the name* and confessedly *for* the popular masses, that is, the producing masses, is a feature this Revolution has in common with all its predecessors. The new feature is that the people, after the first rise, have not disarmed themselves ... they have taken the actual management of their Revolution into their own hands and found at the same time, in case of success, the means to hold it in the hands of the people themselves."¹

He underscored the Commune's profoundly democratic character, both for its aims and for the ways and means by which it sought to achieve these aims, noting that it did not have recourse to acts of violence such as those "in which the revolutions, and still more the counter-revolutions, of the 'better classes' abound".²

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976. pp. 164-65.

² Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, pp. 212-13.

One of the lessons of the Commune is that the proletariat can win political power by relatively peaceful means. However, the measures taken by the new government inevitably encounter growing resistance from the former ruling classes; the insurgency of the counter-revolutionaries gathers momentum. These are the forces that start a civil war. If determined measures of revolutionary violence are not taken against the counter-revolution or if such measures are simply delayed the horrors of white terror are inescapable.

Indicative in this respect are the following words spoken by Marx in a talk with a *World* correspondent on July 3, 1871. The correspondent said he supposed that in Britain the working class could come to power without a violent revolution, by employing the British method of agitation at meetings and in the press until the minority grows into a majority. "I am not so sanguine on that point as you," Marx replied. "The English middle class has always shown itself willing enough to accept the verdict of the majority so long as it enjoyed the monopoly of the voting power. But mark me, as soon as it finds itself outvoted on what it considers vital questions we shall see here a new slave-owner's war."¹

A few months later Marx generalised this thesis, writing: "We should tell the governments: We know that you are an armed force directed against the proletarians; we shall militate against you peaceably where possible, and with weapons where necessary."²

He returned to this vital issue later, at the close of the 1870s. "Historical development can be 'peaceful'," he wrote, "as long as those who wield power in the given society do not use violence to obstruct this development. If, say, in Britain and in the United States the working class should win the majority in parliament or in the Congress it could use legal means to do away with the laws and institutions blocking its development, and even so only to the extent made necessary by social advancement. Nevertheless, the 'peaceful' movement would become 'violent' if it encountered resistance from those interested in preserving the old order, and if these latter found themselves reduced to a vanquished force (as in the American movement and the French Revolution) they would rise against the 'lawful' force."³

In studies made at the time Marx and Engels gave much of their attention to questions related to a dialectico-materialist understanding of history. In concrete terms, this was seen mainly in their in-

¹ *The World*, New York, 18. VII. 1871.

² "Aufzeichnung einer Rede von Karl Marx über die politische Aktion der Arbeiterklasse", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 17, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, S. 652.

³ Karl Marx, "Konspekt der Reichstagsdebatte über das Sozialistengesetz", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 34, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1973, S. 498-499.

terest in the question of the state, a question springing from the need to generalise the historical experience of the Commune and from the need to meet the practical requirements of the ongoing political struggle of the proletariat. In *The Civil War in France* and in the *Outlines* Marx presented an unsurpassed analysis of how the political, state superstructure is established over the capitalist system of relations of production.

The giant apparatus of administration and coercion, which octopus-like entoids the social body in its many tentacles—the bureaucracy, the standing army, the police, the clergy, and the magistrature—has been in existence, he wrote, since the days of absolute monarchy. For the then nascent bourgeois society centralised state power was to serve as a powerful weapon for emancipation from feudalism. The French revolution of the eighteenth century, whose aim was to sweep away the medieval garbage of seigniorial, local, urban, and provincial privileges, could not but also clear the social base of the last roadblocks that were still holding up the full development of centralised state power with its omnipresent institutions patterned according to a hierarchical division of labour.

Under bourgeois-parliamentary regimes the struggle for control of the state machine grew increasingly more acute between rival factions of the ruling class or classes, which lusted for an administration that would give them benefits and the possibility of using state power in their own interests. They went to all lengths to obscure the class nature of the state, to portray it as an impartial force.

As economic progress multiplied the ranks of the working class and compounded its hardships, which fuelled resistance from the proletariat and made it increasingly determined to achieve emancipation, the state more and more openly showed that it was an instrument of class despotism, a political machine for the enslavement of the producers of wealth by those who appropriated that wealth. This became most pronounced in the days of the Bonapartist Empire, when the “whole turpitude of the capitalist regime, given full scope to its innate tendency, broke loose unfettered”.¹ “This ultimate form of the governmental power was at the same time its most prostitute, shameless plunder of the state resources by a band of adventurers, a hotbed of huge state debts, the glory of prostitution, a factitious life of false pretences. The governmental power with all its tinsel covering from top to bottom immersed in the mud.”²

From an analysis of the development of the state superstructure, of which the Paris Commune was an entirely new type, both in form and content, Marx drew a conclusion of abiding significance

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 205.

² Ibid.

for the strategy of the revolutionary proletariat. The Commune had completely borne out that it was necessary to smash the bourgeois state machine as the condition of the social emancipation of the working class: this conclusion was deduced by Marx from the lessons of the revolution of 1848-1849. In generalising the lessons of the Commune Marx wrote that the working class could not simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and wield it for its own purpose. The political instrument of its enslavement could not serve as the political instrument of its emancipation.¹ The revolution in Paris and the experience of the Commune allowed specifying and developing this important proposition of Marxist theory.

Marx did not confine himself to stating his general, principled attitude to the bourgeois state machine. Already then he raised the question of a differentiated approach to the various elements of the state structure. He wrote: "While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society."²

Characteristically, as Marx saw it, the repressive organs consisted not only of the instruments of the material power of the former government (standing army, the police, and so on) but also of the instruments of spiritual oppression. He thought very highly of the Commune's efforts to separate church and state, fundamentally democratise school education, and emancipate science.

The amputation of what Marx called the "most deplorable aspect" of the bourgeois state opens up additional possibilities for utilising, after the proletarian revolution, those of its agencies whose functions are vital to society and conform to the requirements of its development.

The founders of Marxism subsequently dealt with this problem time and again. In 1883 Engels enunciated the fundamental propositions of the Marxist teaching on the state, writing that "the proletarian class will first have to possess itself of the organised political force of the state and with this aid stamp out the resistance of the capitalist class and re-organise society... It may require adaptation to the new functions."³

The character and dimensions of these changes may evidently vary, depending on the situation prevailing in the given country. But everywhere, as Marx and Engels always maintained, the chan-

¹ Ibid., p. 202.

² Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 221.

³ Engels to Phil Van Patten, April 18, 1883, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 341.

ges in the state machine will involve amputating the repressive agencies and the democratisation of socially vital agencies.

Marx considered the demolition of the bourgeois state machine and the creation of a new system of political power by the proletariat in the context of a wider problem—the withering away of the state. In characterising the acts of the Commune, he defined them as a process of the “reabsorption of the state power by society as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it, by the popular masses themselves forming their own force instead of the organised force of their suppression”.¹

Attention to this problem was also given by Engels in his *Introduction to “The Civil War in France”*. Among other things, he criticised the superstitious reverence for the bourgeois state widespread also in social-democratic circles and the belief “that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after otherwise than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials”.²

However, Marx’s approach to the question of the withering away of the state had nothing in common with the grotesquely simplistic formulas of the anarchists for the “abolition” of the state. Marx was aware that this withering away could only be the result of long development.

With this approach is linked the deeper analysis made by Marx and Engels of the question of the proletarian dictatorship. On the basis of the Commune’s experience, they demonstrated that the proletarian revolution and the establishment of working-class political rule would not at once remove the exploiting classes and by a single act reshape the relations of property. The existence of the exploiting classes even after the revolution and the need for a fundamental remoulding of social relations make the dictatorship of the proletariat the guarantee that the building of a socialist society will proceed successfully.

The Commune gave Marx vivid and concrete material for seeing how the democratic substance of the proletarian dictatorship manifests itself in life, in new state forms. The Commune, he noted, represented broad strata of working people and was the flesh and blood of the working people of Paris. Its agencies consisted of “working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class”.³ The fact that they were responsible to their electors closed the door to the emergence of a bureaucratic caste and created new conditions for the functioning of the state machine. The Commune’s agencies—

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 153.

² Frederick Engels, “Introduction to *The Civil War in France*”, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 189.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

the commissions, the armed forces, the people's militia, the courts—were created through the revolutionary initiative of the people for resolving the problems posed by life. Although the Communards endeavoured to substantiate their actions within the framework of old laws and traditions, the new power and its institutions, resting on the authority and strength of the revolutionary people, in fact shattered these laws and traditions. They would have been helpless without the support of the people, without their involvement in the settlement of all issues, big and small.

Thus, having been studiously kept away from administration under all forms of the bourgeois state, the people had now set up a government which not only acted in their interests, but all of whose functions were performed by the masses themselves. Both formally and in practice the Commune made the masses, the working class in the first place, the masters of their own destiny, the subject of sovereign power.

Further, the Commune's experience is eloquent evidence that the profoundly democratic character of the proletarian dictatorship does not preclude but, on the contrary, presupposes the creation of state institutions capable of defending the people's gains and suppressing counter-revolution by sufficiently authoritarian methods.

After the Commune, Marx rounded off his theory of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism as a result of a further study of the question of the proletarian dictatorship. In *Outlines of "The Civil War in France"* he wrote that the creation of new forms of social production was a long and complex process, noting that "this work of regeneration will be again and again relented and impeded by the resistance of vested interests and class egotisms".¹

The complexity of beginning society's transformation and, consequently, the need for the proletarian state as the vital instrument of this transformation became evident already in the course of the social changes instituted by the Commune, of which some were more successful than others. In this connection Marx wrote: "The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par décret du peuple*. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men."²

The development of the idea of a period of transition and the process of obtaining a deeper understanding of the historic role of the

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 157.

² Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 224.

proletarian dictatorship may also be traced in Marx's abstract of Bakunin's *Statehood and Anarchy*, in which he replied, as it were, to the anarchist interpretation of the Commune's experience. Bakunin said he was puzzled by the meaning of the words "the proletariat raised to the level of a ruling estate", asking whom it would rule. To this Marx wrote: "It signifies that as long as there are other classes, particularly the capitalist class, and as long as the proletariat is fighting it (because its enemies do not vanish and the old organisation of society does not disappear when the proletariat comes to power), it has to resort to measures of *violence*, consequently, governmental measures."¹

The classical formulation of the tasks of the transition period and of the proletarian dictatorship as the state of that period was given by Marx later, in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

Moreover, the classics of Marxism found the key to defining the proletarian dictatorship's historical place in the development of the state. In a polemic with the Bakuninists, Marx and Engels wrote in 1872 that "once the aim of the proletarian movement, i.e., the abolition of classes, is attained, the power of the State, which serves to keep the great majority of producers in bondage to a very small exploiter minority, disappears, and the functions of government become simple administrative functions".² The state withers away.

The lessons of the Paris Commune enabled Marx and Engels to make a substantial contribution to the study of the problem of the allies of the working class in the proletarian revolution. As the first experience of proletarian dictatorship, the Commune also tackled crucial national tasks—the eradication of the effects of the thoroughly corrupt Empire and the defence of the nation's freedom and independence. In this, too, the interests of the working class coincided with those of the middle strata of France's society of those times.

In the face of the disasters that rained down on France as a result of the war and in the face of the crisis—national and financial ruin—these strata felt "that not the corrupt class of the would-be slaveholders of France, but only the manly aspirations and the herculean power of the working class can come to the rescue!"³ They realised "that only the working class can... convert science from an instrument of class rule into a popular force, convert the men of science themselves from panderers of class prejudice, place-hunting state parasites, and allies of capital into free agents of thought!"⁴

¹ Karl Marx, "Konspekt von Bakunins Buch 'Staatlichkeit und Anarchie'", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1969, S. 630.

² Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "Fictitious Splits in the International", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 285.

³ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 162.

⁴ *Ibid.*

This was seen in the actual behaviour of the various social groups. "For the first time in history," Marx wrote, "the petty and *moyénne* middle class has openly rallied round the workmen's revolution, and proclaimed it as the only means of its own salvation and that of France! It forms with them the bulk of the National Guard, it sits with them in the Commune, it mediates for them in the Union Républicaine!"¹

For its part, the Commune did much to ease the condition of the middle social strata that had fallen into bondage to the big bourgeoisie—the "creditor class".² The Commune reaffirmed that an alliance had to be formed by the working class with the peasants in the course of the proletarian revolution. Competition from the big farmers, innumerable taxes, usury, the robbing of the peasant by means of the judiciary, which enmeshed him on all sides, reduced him, Marx noted, to the condition of the Indian pariah. Expropriation of the peasants became a commonplace. "What separates the peasant from the proletarian," Marx wrote, "is, therefore, no longer his real interest, but his delusive prejudice."³

Had it held its own, the Commune was the only power that could have, even in the economic situation of those times, cardinally improved the condition of the peasant. It was the only form of government that could change the economic condition of his life, rescue him from expropriation by the landowner, and save him from drudgery and misery. The Commune could have converted his nominal proprietorship of the land into real proprietorship of the fruits of his labour and combined for him the benefits of contemporary agronomy dictated by social wants and encroaching upon him as a hostile agency, without annihilating his position as a really independent producer.⁴ It would have delivered him from the tyranny of the policeman, the gendarme, and the prefect and "put enlightenment by the schoolmaster in the place of stultification by the priest".⁵

In other words, the Commune had every reason to tell the peasants that "its victory was their only hope".⁶ This explains why the Commune's enemies were so afraid of free communication between Paris of the Communards and the provinces. This explains their cowardly haste to "establish a police blockade around Paris, so as to stop the spread of the rinderpest".⁷

¹ Ibid., pp. 161-62.

² Ibid., p. 162.

³ Ibid., p. 160.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 225.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 226.

As formulated by Marx and Engels, the question of allies of the working class in the proletarian revolution was used by Lenin as the point of departure for his relevant teaching. This is one of the central components of Leninism.

The Commune's successes and then its defeat accentuated the question of the relationship between the people and the army. The complexity of this relationship was shown by how the events in Paris unfolded. That there were few government troops in the besieged capital was a factor in clearing the way for the establishment of the Commune. Moreover, the victory of the people was facilitated when some of these troops sided with them. However, it was the standing army that drowned the Commune in blood. A major service of the founders of Marxism was that they immediately noted this and gave the impetus for further theoretical research into this question. Marx, for instance, attached great significance to the fact that in Paris the army was replaced by a National Guard consisting mainly of workers. "This fact," he wrote, "was to become an institution, and the National Guard of the great cities, the people armed against governmental usurpation, to supplant the standing army, defending the government against the people."¹

The question of arming the people and of the relationship between the army and the revolutionary proletarian masses was amplified later in the works of Marx and Engels, of their great continuer Lenin, and in subsequent Marxist literature.

Itself a political act of a higher type, the Commune constituted a refutation of the tactics of political abstentionism pursued by the Proudhonists and then adopted by the Bakuninists. "The morning after the Paris Commune," Engels wrote in the autumn of 1871, "which has made proletarian political action an order of the day, abstention from political action is entirely out of the question."²

Since revolution is a supreme political act, "those who want revolution must also want the means of achieving it, that is, political action, which prepares the ground for revolution and provides the workers with the revolutionary training without which they are sure to become the dupes ... the morning after the battle".³

To preach that the workers should abstain from politics would be tantamount to pushing them into the embrace of bourgeois politics.

Questioning the assertion that every political act was tantamount to recognising the existing order, Engels said: "...so long as this state of affairs offers us the means of protesting against it, our use of

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 206.

² Frederick Engels, "Apropos of Working-Class Political Action", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 245.

³ Ibid.

these means does not signify that we recognise the prevailing order".¹

Actually, the question was not whether to engage in or abstain from politics but what policy to pursue.

"The workers' party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its goal and its own policy."²

The form of political action, as the classics of Marxism noted, could differ depending on the situation and the character of the tasks confronting the working class. A few months after the Commune fell, Marx laid bare the vices of bourgeois parliamentarism and raised before the International Working Men's Association the question of the proletariat and its organisations making the utmost use of parliamentary institutions. "It is wrong to believe," he said in September 1871, "that it is unimportant to have workers in parliament. If their mouths are stopped, as happened to De Potter and Castiau, or they are expelled, as happened to Manuel, these repressions and intolerance have a strong effect on the people; if, on the contrary, as was the case with Bebel and Liebknecht, they get the opportunity to speak from the parliamentary rostrum, their voice is heard by the whole world; in both cases our principles become extremely popular... The governments are hostile to us; they must be resisted with all the means at our disposal. Every worker elected to a parliament is a victory over them, but real men must be selected."³

The Paris Commune gave Marx and Engels extensive material for further research into the international character of the working class, into the working-class movement and struggle. At a new, higher level it reasserted the universality and globality of the proletariat's aspirations for liberation and the epochal social changes it was putting into effect.

On the basis of this material and his analysis of the actual course of events, Marx showed that although it emerged in the specific situation then prevailing in France, the Commune at once became internationally important for it undertook a task of world-wide significance, namely, the emancipation of the working people. The Communards acted "for themselves and mankind".⁴

"If the Commune," Marx wrote in *The Civil War in France*, "was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national government, it was, at the same time, as a working men's government, as the bold champion of

¹ Ibid., p. 246.

² Ibid., p. 245.

³ "Aufzeichnung einer Rede von Karl Marx über die politische Aktion der Arbeiterklasse", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 17. S. 651.

⁴ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 157.

the emancipation of labour, emphatically international."¹ That was why, Marx noted, it "was at once acclaimed by the working class of Europe and the United States as the magic word of delivery".²

Marx contrasted this true internationalism of the Commune to the chauvinism that had always been and remains the principal ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie. This, Marx stressed in his study of the behaviour of the bourgeoisie on the eve and during the period of the Commune, "is a means, by permanent armies, to perpetuate international struggles, to subjugate in each country the producers by pitching them against their brothers in each other country, a means to prevent the international cooperation of the working classes, the first condition of their emancipation".³

The behaviour of the bourgeoisie in the period the Commune was in power made it obvious that the "national make-up" of chauvinism was nothing more than camouflage to conceal unwillingness to stand up for the actual interests of one's own country. Finding themselves confronted by the Paris proletariat, the French chauvinists meekly submitted to the dictates of a foreign invader and betrayed the nation's interests.

In researching this behaviour Marx came to a conclusion of unfading significance for subsequent studies of the strategies employed by the ruling class, especially under conditions of imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism. He wrote: "The genuine patriotism of the bourgeoisie—so natural for the real proprietors of the different 'national' estates—has faded into a mere sham consequent upon the cosmopolitan character imprinted upon their financial, commercial, and industrial enterprise. Under similar circumstances it would explode in all countries as it did in France."⁴

The example of the Paris Commune brought into prominence the enormous practical and political significance of the question of the correlation between the spontaneous and the conscious in social development. The unanimity shown by the Paris workers in the revolutionary upsurge of March 18 was due to their having had a clear and concrete task, that of overthrowing the capitulation-prone government and electing the Commune. But there had to be more than revolutionary enthusiasm to establish the power of the proletariat and proceed with the colossal work of reorganising society. The masses had to have knowledge and ideological unity based on universally recognised scientific principles.

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 226; also Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 155.

² Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 152.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

However, most of the Communards were exponents of pre-Marxian forms of socialism and rejected the very possibility of such ideological unity, had blind faith in spontaneous actions, or followed in the wake of the petty-bourgeois republicans—the neo-Jacobins, who lacked a scientific theory, an understanding of the basic aims of the working-class movement, and the ability to use the most effective means for achieving these aims. This was unquestionably one of principal weaknesses of the Commune that led to its downfall.

The history of the Commune convincingly showed the significance of organisational unity of the working masses, chiefly of their vanguard. The absence of such unity devitalised the efficacy of many of the Commune's actions, opened a breach for the subversive activities of its enemies, and reduced its capacity for resistance. The men elected by the Paris proletariat to head the government, the Commune Council, proved unable collectively to chart and implement a coherent policy expressing the will of their class and consonant with its great historic mission. This also proved to be beyond the capacity of the Communards who were members of the International Working Men's Association and aware that lack of unity was disastrous.

Naturally, with the lessons of the Commune before them, the classics of Marxism specially accentuated the need for political parties of the working class armed with revolutionary, scientific theory. To provide this theory became the principal aim of Marx and Engels in their practical and ideological work in the international working-class movement.

NEW CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE

The defeat of the Paris Commune was the signal for intensifying repressions against the working-class movement and its organisations, chiefly the International Working Men's Association. "The International is attacked everywhere," Engels wrote. "All the forces of the old world—the military tribunals and the civil courts, the police and the press, the retrograde landowners and bourgeoisie—vie with each other in persecuting the International, and throughout the continent there is hardly a place where all means are not used to outlaw this great fear-inspiring brotherhood of workers."¹

The campaign of harassment against the International was initiated by the French government. In June 1871 the French Foreign Minister Jules Favre sent all the European governments a circular urging the destruction of the International Working Men's Association. There was an immediate response from the German Chancellor

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Der Kongress von Sonvillier und die Internationale", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 17, S. 475.

Bismarck. Steps to cut short the International's activities were discussed at a meeting of the German and Austrian emperors in August-September 1871. The campaign against the International was soon joined by the ruling circles of Russia, Italy, Spain, Denmark, and Belgium. The tsarist government of Russia suggested convening an international conference to coordinate the measures to be taken against the Working Men's Association.

Police harassment personified these steps to outlaw the International. In France, relation with the International was proclaimed a crime punishable by imprisonment. In Spain the Minister for the Interior ordered the disbandment of the International's sections in that country. Analogous steps were taken in some other European countries. The ban was followed by action: in Germany members of the Brunswick Committee of the Social-Democratic Labour Party were tried, while August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were sentenced to imprisonment on charges of high treason. There was a wave of arrests in Spain in the spring of 1871 and in Italy in the summer and autumn of the same year. Leaders of the International's sections in Denmark were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. As a result, the majority of the International's sections had to go underground. This baiting and persecution greatly complicated the work of the International Working Men's Association as a ramified legally-functioning organisation.

But the level of working-class organisation and militancy was high enough to blunt the assault of the combined forces of European reaction. The ideas of class solidarity and proletarian internationalism, recorded in the Rules, sank deep roots in the minds of the International's members. The German Social-Democratic Party continued to attract more members despite the repressions. Sections of the International continued to spring up and function underground in France (particularly in the southern provinces) until the summer of 1873; the International's sections in Spain withstood the attempts to disband them. Militant actions of the working class (strikes and political demonstrations) followed one another in quick succession in a number of other European countries. The hopes of the ruling classes that the defeat of the Commune would put an end to the organised working-class movement did not materialise.

The fall of the Commune did not lead to apathy or demoralisation of the proletariat. The Commune had given an impetus to the growth of its class consciousness and stressed the urgency of organising its forces, the role of theory, and the importance of ideological unity.¹ The lessons of the Paris Commune cleared the way for a fur-

¹ The Commune's impact on the international working-class movement is examined in *International Legacy of the Paris Commune*, Moscow, 1971; *The Paris Commune and Marxism*, Moscow, 1973 (both in Russian).

ther advance in linking scientific theory with the mass working-class movement. "As a foremost fighter for the social revolution," Lenin wrote, "the Commune has won sympathy wherever there is a proletariat suffering and engaged in struggle. The epic of its life and death, the sight of a workers' government which seized the capital of the world and held it for over two months, the spectacle of the heroic struggle of the proletariat and the torments it underwent after its defeat—all this raised the spirit of millions of workers, aroused their hopes and enlisted their sympathy for the cause of socialism."¹

However, the impact of the Commune was not identical everywhere. In most cases it inspired the consolidation of genuinely revolutionary forces and led to marked progress in the spread of the ideas of scientific communism. However, this impact also brought about a polarisation of ideological currents in the working-class movement itself. The reformist trend prevailed in Britain, where the ideology and practice of trade-unionism finally took shape in the 1870s. Anarchism won growing influence in some Latin American states and in Spain and Italy.

The Bakuninists endeavoured to benefit from the involvement of new contingents of the working class in the mass movement. Misrepresenting the lessons of the Commune, they asserted that these lessons bore out the anarchist idea of "social liquidation", envisaging the immediate destruction of the state and the integral social organism by the revolution. From this angle the Commune was depicted not as a dictatorship of the proletariat but as the materialisation of federalist ideas. Ignoring the fact that the very creation of the Paris Commune, i.e., the seizure of power by the working class, was a supreme political act, the Bakuninists portrayed the lessons of the Commune as showing that the working class should not engage in politics; they declared that any participation in political activity was a form of collaboration with the bourgeois state system.

In an attempt to enlist the support of class-conscious workers and consolidate their own position in the International, the Bakuninists appealed to the proletariat. However, both in theory and in practice they reduced the concept of the working class to what they called the "oppressed lower orders", chiefly the lumpenproletariat. Hence the methods which they propagated and used: what was needed, they declared, was not the organisation of the masses but conspiratorial activity by a few select people, and they refused to accept revolutionary order and discipline.

Marx and Engels showed that the essence of the Bakuninist programme boiled down to the following:

¹ V. I. Lenin. "In Memory of the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 143.

"1. All the depravities in which the life of declassed persons ejected from the upper strata of society must inevitably become involved are proclaimed to be so many ultra-revolutionary virtues.

"2. It is regarded as a matter of principle and necessity to debauch a small minority of carefully selected workers, who are enticed away from the masses by a mysterious initiation, by making them take part in the game of intrigues and deceit of the secret government, and by preaching to them that through giving free rein to their 'evil passions' they can shake the old society to its foundations.

"3. The chief means of propaganda is to attract young people by fantastic lies about the extent and power of the secret society, prophecies of the imminent revolution it has prepared and so on, and to compromise in government eyes the most progressive people from among the well-to-do classes with a view to exploiting them financially.

"4. The economic and political struggle of the workers for their emancipation is replaced by the universal *pan-destructive* acts of heroes of the underworld—this latest incarnation of revolution."¹

Anarchism, including its Bakuninist form, had been a danger to the organised working-class movement even before the Commune. But after the Commune fell, this danger multiplied. The anarchists made it hard to evaluate the lessons of victory and defeat correctly. They impeded the formation of the proletariat's class self-awareness, and made it difficult for the working-class movement to bring its strategy and tactics into line with the changed situation. The actions of the anarchists jeopardised the advanced, most militant segment of the working class and gave reactionaries the arguments to justify a policy of repressions against proletarian organisations.

The danger of anarchism grew visibly also because by the early 1870s its influence on the masses had begun to spread in a number of countries. In some cases this was due to the relative youth and low development level of the proletariat and also to its indistinct differentiation from the other "lower orders" of exploiting society; in other cases—to the tenacity of anti-etatist traditions that had matured during the struggle against the feudal and semi-feudal state machine; in still other cases—to the kinship of anarchist doctrines with formerly popular petty-bourgeois social utopian schools of thought (for instance, Proudhonism). Frequently these factors "coexisted".

The social base on which anarchism relied and exercised an influence likewise varied. It comprised urban petty-bourgeois elements, artisans pauperised by capitalist development, semi-proletarians, and lumpenproletarians, including declassed persons from the upper

¹ *The Hague Congress of the First International, September 2-7, 1872, Minutes and Documents*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 611.

social strata. The anarchist view that the social revolution was a spontaneous, romantic action attracted a section of the intelligentsia, especially young intellectuals, who scorned the old order but were very vague about how to change it radically. In cases where the worker masses came under anarchist influence they were mainly relatively new proletarian contingents with no experience of class struggle. However, here and there the anarchists won over individual contingents of revolutionary-minded workers, who for various reasons were outside the sphere of influence of the scientific proletarian world-view (Spain, especially Catalonia, and Belgium).

The philosophy of the anarchists underwent modifications depending on a combination of various factors—this foreshadowed the subsequent differentiation among them. For example, the ideology of Spanish anarchism was strongly influenced by the circumstance that it had its stronghold in Catalonia, one of the nation's most industrialised regions.¹ Because the Catalan proletariat had experience of class struggles it refused to accept some basic Bakuninist dogmas. In spite of the basically negative attitude of anarchism's spokesmen to "organisation", at congresses of the sections of the International Working Men's Association in Spain, where adherents of anarchism were predominant (including the congresses in Barcelona in 1870 and in Saragossa in 1872, and the conference in Valencia in 1871) emphasis was laid on the need for setting up a united, centralised proletarian organisation. The relevant viewpoint was recorded in the resolutions of these fora. Nor did the Spanish workers respond to the Bakuninists' negative attitude to strikes. It is symbolic that precisely during these years the general strike began to be propagandised as a means of "social liquidation".

While rejecting the political struggle in principle, the Spanish anarchists were in practice constantly faced with the necessity of departing from this principle. As the loophole for this they made wide use of Bakunin's argument that members of the International could participate in political life as private persons and at their own risk. This gave them the possibility of conducting political actions while avoiding any formal transgression of doctrine.

The Spanish anarchists contended that with "social liquidation" the principles of statehood would lose their validity, but in the same breath they declared that in the future society the state machine would have to be replaced by a centralised organisation of producers. Illusory as this idea was, it signified a visible departure from the Bakuninist view that "social liquidation" meant the disintegration of the social organism. The anarcho-collectivist idea that the right

¹ A. Gonzales, *A History of the Spanish Sections of the International Working Men's Association, 1868-1873*, Moscow, 1964 (Russian translation).

of property in the implements and means of production and in the products of labour should be transferred to the trade unions or associations of workers at each given enterprise took final shape in Spain in 1871-1872. This did not entirely coincide with orthodox anarchism.

In Italy¹ anarchist ideas underwent a somewhat different transformation. They were much less influenced by specific proletarian interests. The significance of economic struggles, including strikes, was belittled. These struggles were regarded chiefly as a means of "awakening" a revolutionary spirit in the workers. Organisations of the International Working Men's Association were seen exclusively as instruments of propaganda and preparation of armed actions. Decentralisation and the negation of authority were accepted unconditionally.

Encouraged by their successes in Spain, Italy, and some other countries the Bakuninists set their sights on seizing key positions in the International. This was expressed in their assault on the scientific communism, their attacks on the leadership of the Association, mainly on Marx. Bakunin and his supporters combined these attacks with a redoubling of secret activity in the International itself.

In 1870-1872 Bakunin was more active than ever before, using his long-standing connections with radical intellectuals: he recruited new converts, organised contributions to the press, rallied the anarchist forces, and charted the uniform tactics to be used by them in the International. He and his supporters did not act openly: their attacks on the Rules and programme principles of the International and on the work of the General Council were accompanied with assurances of fidelity to socialism; more, they used the documents of the International and the resolutions of its congresses (which, in most cases, they misrepresented) as a screen.

As early as 1868-1869 Bakunin had founded a conspiratorial Alliance, a sectarian organisation that was kept secret from the International as well. Contrary to the principles proclaimed by the anarchists, this was a pre-eminently autocratic body. It demanded strict discipline, unquestioning subordination of the rank-and-file to the centre.² Bakunin's tactics were based on vitalising this body by seizing leading posts in the International's local sections and controlling the press.

The reformists engaged in divisive activities in the International in parallel with the Bakuninists. Under pressure from the bourgeois press, two members of the International's General Council, George Odger and Benjamin Lucraft, who represented the British workers

¹ I. V. Grigoryeva, *The Working-Class and Socialist Movements in Italy in the Epoch of the First International*, Moscow, 1966 (in Russian).

² *The International Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 1, pp. 595-96.

(the former had headed the London Trades Council), remonstrated against unconditional support for the Paris insurgents. Engels qualified their behaviour as betrayal of the proletariat's interests at the decisive moment.¹ This was an unambiguous sign that some trade unions were departing from the International and that reformist tendencies were acquiring strength in the International's British sections.

MARXIST PROGRAMME AND ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES PREVAIL IN THE INTERNATIONAL

A broad forum vested with the requisite powers had to be convened to formalise the lessons of the Paris Commune in programme documents, specify the International's tasks in the new situation, and put an end to the attacks on its unity. But the obtaining situation made it impossible to hold a regular congress of the International. Therefore, acting on Engels' suggestion, the General Council invoked the precedent of 1865 to pass a decision to hold a secret conference with the participation of the International's sections in different countries. In the course of the preparations for this conference Marx and Engels defined the basic question to which attention had to be called, namely, the formation of political parties of the working class. Marx and Engels felt that because the lessons of the Commune were read correctly by advanced proletarians it was possible to raise this question and act on it. Indeed, every class-conscious participant in the movement was asking why the organisation had been unprepared and ineffective. This led to their appreciation of a key proposition of scientific communism formulated by Marx and Engels before the revolutions of 1848-1849, namely that the workers had to have their own independent political party.

Delegates from only Belgium, Switzerland, Spain and Britain were able to attend the conference, which opened in London on September 17, 1871. The workers of Germany, Italy, the USA, Ireland, and France were represented by the respective secretaries-correspondents of the General Council.² Nonetheless, all the currents in the International were represented: proponents of scientific communism, left Proudhonists, Bakuninists, Blanquists, and trade-unionists. The debates were strongly influenced by the presence of a large group of emigre Communards, whose impressions of what Paris had lived through were still fresh.³

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 253.

² *London Conference of the First International*, Moscow, 1936, pp. 168-69 (in Russian).

³ *The First International*, Part 2 (1870-1876), Moscow, 1965, from p. 135 onwards (in Russian).

Marx and Engels played an active part in the work of the conference and this largely determined the course of the debates and the character of the resolutions.

The key question of political action by the proletariat was hotly debated. The initial draft of the relevant resolution was submitted by the Communard Edouard Vaillant, who was a member of the General Council. It suggested re-emphasising that "political and the social questions are inseparable, that they are two aspects of one and the same issue... the issue of the abolition of classes".¹

Vaillant urged showing in the political struggle the same unity as in the economic struggle, drawing attention to the harm that was inflicted on the working-class movement by the abstentionism of the Proudhonists.² However, the Vaillant draft contained the Blanquist underestimation of legal political activity, especially of the use of parliaments.

This draft was fiercely attacked by the anarchists. Their view was articulated by the Spanish representative Anselmo Lorenzo, who categorically condemned working-class political action of any kind with the contention that this was inconsistent with the spirit of the International and the letter of its Rules. In contrast to Vaillant, Lorenzo proposed the formation of an international association of trade unions, arguing that this would be the best form of militant organisation of the proletariat and the prototype of the society's future organisation. This idea was supported by the Communard Pierre Louis Delahaye, who contended that this type of international association would be an instrument "of administrative decentralisation, of the creation of the genuine Commune of the future".³

In itself the idea of setting up an international organisation of trade unions was productive. But counterposed to the idea of a proletarian political organisation it became its own opposite—an instrument not for the organisation but for the disorganisation of the working-class struggle. The accompanying characteristic describing trade unions as the prototype of the future society's organisational structure was an indication that a new form was taking shape within anarchism, which subsequently became known as anarcho-syndicalism.

The total untenability of the stand taken by the anarchists at this conference was laid bare by Marx and then by Engels. They made it clear, having the anarchists and the trade-unionists in mind, that those who, despite the lessons of the Commune, insisted that proletariat had no need for political struggle were denying it the conquest of political supremacy, which was the only means for attaining the

¹ *London Conference of the First International*, p. 60.

² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

aims of the working-class movement. Moreover, they showed the basic distinction between the functions of the trade unions and the political organisations of the working class.

The final text of the resolution, edited by Marx and Engels, contained the following words, which were absent in the Vaillant draft: "... against the collective power of the propertied classes, the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes." And further: "... this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and of its ultimate end—the abolition of classes."¹

Thus, the resolution clearly defined the aims and ways of struggle of the working class, and lucidly answered the questions facing the working-class movement. It was backed up by other resolutions, which specified the functions of the General Council, prevented the creation of sectarian sections, and demanded strict observance of the Rules. On the whole, the International's structure was brought closer to that of a political party of the proletariat.

The conference resolutions were approved by most of the sections and newspapers of the International Working Men's Association.² This accentuated the negative reaction of the Bakuninists. Representatives of their organisations in Switzerland gathered in Sonvillier on November 12, 1871, where they adopted an appeal to all the federations of the International, the so-called Sonvillier Circular.³

In this circular, which became the banner of struggle against scientific communism, the Bakuninists declared war on the "school" demanding the "conquest of political power by the working class". Contrary to the London conference resolutions on strengthening the International organisationally, the circular demanded the International's conversion into a "free federation" of autonomous local sections. All the crucial organisational principles were questioned: discipline, centralisation, and the powers and duties of the General Council. The anarchist dogma of negating authority as a form of relationship between society and the individual was turned into negation of the need for a united organisation with central leading bodies. All this was accompanied by attacks on the "spirit of dictatorship" and by the assertion that the General Council was exercising a "demoralising influence". The circular demanded the immediate convocation of an extraordinary congress to reconsider the Rules and condemn the General Council.

¹ *The General Council of the First International, 1870-1871, Minutes*, p. 445.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 440-50.

³ *Circulaire à toutes les fédérations de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs*, Geneva, 1871.

The Bakuninist centre in Switzerland and Bakunin himself anxiously sought the support of the International's organisations in this struggle. However, in Switzerland only eight Jura sections signalled their support. In Italy the idea of an extraordinary congress received the backing of several sections. But the tone of the circular astonished even many of Bakunin's close friends. Nevertheless, the Belgian and Spanish federations and some local sections in other countries called for a revision of the General Rules in order to give more autonomy to the sections and cut the powers of (or even abolish) the General Council, and urged renunciation of political struggle (which, in many cases, meant renunciation of forming blocs with bourgeois parties). However, in Switzerland itself the local organisations emphatically rejected the Bakuninist demands. At a meeting on December 2, 1871, thirty Geneva sections passed a resolution of confidence in the General Council, approving the resolutions of the London conference and protesting against the divisive activities of the Bakuninists.¹ A similar statement was made by the Romance Federation on December 24 and by the Zurich sections on January 27, 1872. *Tagwacht* and *L'Egalité*, newspapers of the International, campaigned against the Bakuninists and propagated the resolutions of the London conference. Action against the Bakuninists was taken by the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Germany, the Austrian sections, a large proportion of the British and Irish sections, sections in Denmark, France, and the USA, and a large segment of the emigre Communards.

Talented organisers and publicists, including Pablo Iglesias, the self-educated worker José Mesa (the first Spanish translator of works by Marx and Engels), and the bootmaker Francisco Mora, grouped around the Marxist Nev. Madrid Federation and its newspaper *Emancipación*. In Italy the General Council had the support of the Plebe group and, for some time, of the Milan section. Despite the relative numerical weakness of these groups, their efforts cleared the way for surmounting the anarchist influence. A large contribution to strengthening the General Council's links with Spain and Italy was made by Engels, who was elected secretary-correspondent for these two countries after the London conference. He contacted representatives of working-class organisations and put together the bulwark for a fight with the Bakuninists.

On January 10, 1872, *Volksstaat*, newspaper of the German Social-Democratic Labour Party, carried an article by Engels, "The Congress in Sonvillier and the International", in which he refuted the slander that the London conference and the General Council had tried to foist on the International principles alien to it. He made it

¹ *Egalité*, December 7, 1871.

plain that the anarchist organisational principles, which were disorganising and splitting the movement, were in conflict with the Rules and spirit of the International.¹ With reaction taking the offensive, cohesion and unity of action were vital to the proletariat, he wrote. This article upheld the principle of proletarian party commitment.

In letters to many of their associates in different countries, Marx and Engels criticised the basic propositions of the anarchists. They denounced the idealism of Bakunin, who regarded the state as the principal instrument of exploitation and considered that its abolition would pave the way for the eradication of capitalism.² They stressed that abstention from politics was pushing the workers into the embrace of the bourgeois republicans. They showed that the anarchist negation of authority was untenable. Engels wrote: "... the fight needs to have all our forces brought together in a fist and concentrated at the central point of attack. And when I hear people speak of authority and centralisation as of two things deserving condemnation whatever the circumstances, I feel that those who say this either have no idea of what revolution is or are revolutionaries only in word."³ Marx and Engels also denounced another aspect of anti-authoritarian theories—their denial of the need for proletarian statehood. In letters written in those years Engels showed for the first time that the conditions created by large-scale machine production were making state administration and regulation imperative. Further, he drew attention to the Commune's experience, which had confirmed the need for state measures against counter-revolution.

At the same time Marx and Engels wrote a comprehensive reply to the attacks of the Bakuninists. The resultant pamphlet, "Fictitious Splits in the International", was endorsed by the General Council on March 5, 1872, as a private circular. The title was evidence that at the time Marx and Engels believed the unity of the International could be maintained.

In this pamphlet they traced the origin of the conflict, showing that from the moment they joined the International the Bakuninists had been trying to impose on it principles conflicting with its basic programme documents. The resolutions of the London conference were merely a logical amplification of the ideas underlying the Rules and the resolutions of the congresses held in 1866-1869. While criticising anarchism as a whole, Marx and Engels showed that it was

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Der Kongress von Sonvillier und die Internationale", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 17, S. 475.

² Engels to Theodor Cuno, January 24, 1872, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 257-58; N. Y. Kolpinsky, *F. Engels' Activity During the Years of the First International*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 175-76 (in Russian).

³ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *On the Paris Commune*, p. 292.

antipodal to the theory of scientific communism, to the true interests of the working-class movement. They made it clear that Bakuninism signified a revival of socialist sectarianism, that it was pulling the movement back to a stage it had already passed.¹

This ideological struggle witnessed the polarisation of the currents opposed to each other and, at the same time, the internal consolidation of these currents. The newspaper of the Jura Federation became the mouthpiece of the entire anarchist movement. In their turn, the forces gravitating towards scientific communism concentrated around the General Council: a segment of the Blanquists, emigre Communards, a large proportion of the Russian and Polish revolutionary emigres, and others. For them participation in the struggle against anarchism became an important phase in the crystallisation of their ideological views and their adoption of Marxism.

In the summer of 1872 new circumstances compounded the ideological struggle in the International. Incontrovertible information was received by the General Council that a conspiratorial international organisation of Bakuninists was operating in the International Working Men's Association. In early August of that year Marx and Engels came into possession of some of the secret Alliance's documents, which allowed them to draw the following conclusion: "For the first time in the history of the working-class struggles, we stumble over a secret conspiracy plotted in the midst of that class, and intended to undermine, not the existing capitalist *regime*, but the very Association in which that *regime* finds its most energetic opponent. It is a conspiracy got up to hamper the proletarian movement."²

This made the Bakuninists' further membership of the International intolerable. To permit them to continue acting in the Association would have been tantamount to giving them the opportunity to use the International, which was popular among the workers, to benefit by its prestige and glorious traditions. It had now to be a question not only of ideologically defeating anarchism but also of placing it outside the International organisationally.

This was not at once appreciated by all of the supporters of Marx and Engels in the International. It took a great deal of effort to explain the significance and inevitability of this formulation of the question—this is evidenced, in particular, by the many letters written by Marx and Engels.

In parallel it became increasingly important to fight the reformist distortions of the aims and tasks of the organised working-class movement. After the fall of the Commune, trade-unionism, which had

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, "Fictitious Splits in the International", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, pp. 247-87.

² *The General Council of the First International, 1871-1872, Minutes*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 444.

sunk tenacious roots in the British labour movement, took the place of Proudhonism, which had become ideologically bankrupt, as scientific communism's main opponent on the right. Some specifics of development in Britain (the increased differentiation of the proletariat, the relatively large proportion in it of highly-paid workers, and the social manoeuvring of the governing class during the Gladstonian "liberal era") led to the broad dissemination of reformist ideology. Keynotes of this ideology were its denial of the need for the proletariat to pursue an independent policy and its renunciation of the movement's socialist aims and revolutionary forms of struggle.

Reformist ideology prevailed in the trade unions and influenced British members of the International. After the London conference this was seen in the fact that many of them read the resolution "On Political Action of the Working Class" in a purely liberal sense, in other words, they saw political action of the proletariat as reduced to electing "worker" members of Parliament under the aegis and in alliance with the Liberal Party, to enforcing reforms that did not affect the class rule of the bourgeoisie.

The reformists were led by John Hales, a gifted orator and a good organiser, who had for some years been prominent in the British sections of the International and in the General Council. When the Paris Commune was in power he was active in the movement of solidarity with it. Unlike Odger and Lucraft, he did not succumb to the influence of the reactionary bourgeois press, which was then attacking the Communards. But after the London conference his differences with the truly proletarian nucleus of the General Council grew increasingly more pronounced, while the debates started as a result of these differences conclusively showed the reformist substance of his stand. Hales was joined by Johann Georg Eccarius, a veteran of the working-class movement and an old associate of Marx and Engels. The stand adopted by him showed how difficult it was to learn the lessons of the Commune and develop the strategy of the working-class movement: even some unquestionably sincere veterans of the working-class movement fell short of this task.

While resolutely countering the tendency towards a shift to the right, that was to be observed in the British labour movement, Marx and Engels paid particularly close attention to the ideological struggle in the British sections of the International.¹ They were determined to uphold the banner of the International Working Men's Association and its programme principles as the basis for forming an independent proletarian party in the future.

One of the first issues revealing the demarcation between the consistent proletarian and the reformist forces was that of the Irish sec-

¹ V. E. Kunina, *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 349-78 (in Russian).

tions. These sections had acquired increasing influence with the growth of the working-class movement in Ireland following the fall of the Paris Commune. They sprang up not only in Ireland but also (a large number) in Britain and in the USA. Represented in the General Council by J. Patrick MacDonnell, a former member of the Fenian movement, they acted in close contact with Marx and his supporters.

The prime objective of the Irish sections was to combine the struggle for national aims and the class goals of the proletariat correctly and thereby help to release Irish workers from the grip of nationalist and religious prejudices and draw them into the movement for social emancipation. This required a sympathetic attitude on the part of other organisations of the International for the national feelings of the Irish people lacerated by centuries of oppression and discrimination.

Besides ignoring this circumstance, the reformist wing of the labour movement in Britain in most cases adopted a nationalistic and chauvinist attitude to the Irish people. In some instances this took the shape of actions that amounted to gross betrayal of class brothers. In one instance in the spring of 1872, despite appeals from the relevant section of the International the British Federal Council denied assistance to strikers in Cork. An analogous stand was taken on this question by the trade unions.

At a debate on the Irish question in the First International's General Council in the spring of 1872, the attitude of Hales and his supporters was subjected to devastating criticism. Engels noted at the debate that the 700-year-long oppression of Ireland could not be ignored, saying that "so long as that oppression existed, it was an insult to Irish working men to ask them to submit to a British Federal Council".¹ The demand that the Irish workers should renounce the struggle for independence, he declared, had nothing in common with the principles of the International. "If members of a conquering nation," he said, "called upon the nation they had conquered and continued to hold down to forget their specific nationality and position, to 'sink national differences' and so forth, that was not Internationalism, it was nothing else but preaching to them submission to the yoke, and attempting to justify and to perpetuate the dominion of the conqueror under the cloak of Internationalism."²

The debate started in the Manchester section over the question of nationalising land was also used for criticism of the reformist views that were becoming widespread not only in Britain. In a report on this subject Marx, unlike the reformists, who reduced the tasks of the

¹ *The General Council of the First International, 1871-1872, Minutes*, p. 298.

² *Ibid.*

working class to purely bourgeois-democratic actions, dealt with the transformation of agriculture from the standpoint of the tasks of the proletarian revolution and the socialist reorganisation of the whole of society. It was the aim of the working-class movement, he said, to transform land and other means of production into public property, into the property of the whole nation (not of individual associations). This was the only basis on which the relations between labour and capital could be thoroughly reshaped and production run rationally. However, "a society composed of associations of free and equal producers, carrying on the social business on a common and rational plan"¹ could only be built as a result of a deep-going social revolution and of the proletariat winning political power.

The General Council's debate on the American sections was spear-headed against the reformist interpretation of political struggles. The number of these sections had grown markedly in 1871-early 1872: there were now over 100. Their popularity rose, inducing bourgeois elements to use the banner of the International for their political game. This was done, in particular, by the bourgeois feminists Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, who set up some small pseudo-proletarian organisations that without authorisation proclaimed themselves sections of the International Working Men's Association. The strong denunciation of these actions by bone fide sections of the International was supported by the proletarian core of the General Council. But Hales and Eccarius opposed separation from bourgeois "new growths". As a result of the debate on this question, which ended with the General Council adopting a resolution, Hales and his supporters found themselves in isolation.

Thanks to Marx and Engels, the struggle against opportunism rallied the revolutionary elements of the British labour movement (Ernest Charles Jones, Charles Heys, Friedrich Lessner, Eugène Dupont, J. Patrick MacDonnel, and others). As a consequence, a congress of British sections of the International in Nottingham (July 20-22, 1872) endorsed the resolutions of the 1871 London conference. True, reformist influence affected the congress reading of the problem of forming a political party of the working class. But this influence was diluted considerably at the Manchester congress (June 1-2, 1873), which passed resolutions calling for an independent political party of the working class in Britain, the nationalisation of all means of production, and the adoption of the red banner as the International's symbol in Britain. The latter resolution spoke of an armed struggle by the workers, should that be necessary.

¹ Karl Marx, "The Nationalisation of the Land", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 290.

Under the Rules of the International, no conference is authorised to amend programme documents. Consequently, the resolutions adopted in London and published as an appeal of the General Council were no more than a platform for rallying the revolutionary segment of the International and dissociation from anarchist and reformist ideologies. It was important to make the London resolutions part of the International's mandatory programme. This was to be the starting point of the subsequent development of the proletarian movement.

With this aim in view it was decided to convene a congress of the International. Beginning in June 1872 Marx and Engels devoted all their energies to the preparations. They gave priority to ensuring unity among all genuinely proletarian forces in the International. In this context debates were held in the General Council and its Executive Committee, as the Permanent Committee became known from July 1872 onwards. This, too, was the keynote of the articles written by Marx and Engels and of their correspondence with their closest associates.

Organisational questions likewise commanded considerable attention during the preparations. The notification on the convocation of the congress stated: "The General Council ... places on the order of the day as the most important question to be discussed by the Congress of The Hague: The revision of the General Rules and Regulations."¹

The anarchists, who were determined to decentralise the International, pressed for a revision of its basic documents. Contrary to them, Marx and Engels believed that the International's revolutionary proletarian core would introduce into the Rules provisions reflecting the major resolutions of the London conference and thereby strengthen the organisation by safeguarding it against the divisive activities of the Bakuninists.

It was evident that there would be a hard struggle over this and all the other questions on the agenda. Marx assessed the situation realistically, writing to the USA and Germany: "*At this congress the question will be one of the life and death of the International.*"²

The congress was formally opened on September 2, 1872. Despite the difficulties caused by, in particular, the mass repressions against members of the International, 65 delegates arrived in The Hague from 15 countries. They included representatives from France (emigre Communards and delegates from sections functioning secretly in that country), Germany, Austria-Hungary, Australia, the USA,

¹ *The General Council of the First International, 1871-1872, Minutes*, p. 419.

² Marx an Friedrich Adolph Sorge, 21. Juni 1872, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 491; Marx an Ludwig Kugelmann, 29. Juli 1872, S. 505.

Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark, and the Netherlands. It was the first general congress attended by Marx and Engels.¹

A sharp debate unfolded on all issues, one of which was the mandates of the delegates. In the interim between two congresses the General Council, in upholding the organisation's proletarian character, had denied membership to a number of sections that were either clearly bourgeois-reformist or left-sectarian. At the congress these decisions were disputed by the reformists and the anarchists. For their part, at the discussion of the mandates Marx, Engels, and their supporters declared that the proletarian organisation had no room for a secret league pursuing its own aims. "We see," Engels wrote in *Volksstaat*, "that under the form of verifying the mandates nearly all the practical questions which had occupied the International for a year were examined and settled. By a majority of from 38 to 45 against a minority of from 12 to 20, who mostly abstained altogether from voting, every single action of the General Council was approved by the Congress and it was given one vote of confidence after another."²

After stormy debates over the Regulations' clauses concerning the General Council, the congress rejected the attempts of the anarchists to abolish the Council and adopted recommendations to specify the latter's powers and duties and strengthen the International's organisational and ideological unity.

Marx and Engels showed that the Council had to have wider powers and devoted special attention to its responsibility to the International. Their view was supported in many masterly speeches. Friedrich Adolph Sorge, who helped to form sections of the International in the USA, said: "When Guillaume (a Swiss Bakuninist—*Author.*) wants to have the IWA without a head he is debasing it to the lowest animal organism. We want not only a head, but a head full of brains."³

Adolf Hepner, one of the editors of the German Social-Democratic newspaper *Volksstaat*, attacked the anti-authoritarianism of the Bakuninists, saying: "Here we have talk against authority: we also are against excesses of any kind, but a certain authority, a certain prestige, will always be necessary to provide cohesion in the party. It is logical that such anti-authoritarians have to abolish also the federal councils, the federations, the committees and even the sections, because authority is exercised to a greater or lesser degree

¹ A. E. Koroteyeva, *The Hague Congress of the First International*, Moscow, 1963 (in Russian).

² *The Hague Congress of the First International, September 2-7, 1872, Reports and Letters*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 107.

³ *The Hague Congress of the First International, September 2-7, 1872, Minutes and Documents*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 149.

by all of them; they must establish absolute anarchy everywhere, that is, they must turn the militant International into a petty-bourgeois party in a dressing-gown and slippers."¹

One of the congress' most important decisions was to include the resolution "On Political Action of the Working Class", passed by the 1871 London conference, in the General Rules. In its new wording it read in part: "In its struggle against the collective power of the propertied classes, the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes.

"This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social revolution, and of its ultimate end, the abolition of classes... The conquest of political power has therefore become the great duty of the working class."²

This was a blow to the reformist views on the character and aims of the political party of the proletariat.

Further, the congress passed a resolution instructing the General Council to sponsor the formation of a broad international organisation of trade unions.

The final act of the congress was the resolution, proposed by Marx, Engels, and some other members of the old General Council, to transfer its venue to New York for 1872-1873.³ Engels explained this move, which seemed unexpected at the time, with the words: "... most active members of the previous General Council had been obliged recently to devote all their time to the International, but were no longer in a position to do so. Marx and Engels had already informed their friends months earlier that it was possible for them to pursue their scientific work only on the condition that they retired from the General Council." In these circumstances two elements could gain control of the General Council were it to remain in London. "One of these elements consisted of the French Blanquists (who, it is true, had never been recognised by Blanqui), a small coterie who replaced discernment of the real course of the movement with revolutionary talk, and propaganda activity with petty spurious conspiracy leading only to useless arrests. To hand over the leadership of the International in France to these people would mean senselessly throwing our people there into prison... There were enough opportunities at the Congress itself for people to become convinced that the International in France would put up with anything rather than

¹ Ibid., p. 161.

² Ibid., p. 282.

³ When this resolution was passed, the Blanquists, who had until then supported Marx, demonstratively walked out of the congress.

the domination of these gentlemen.”¹ The second dangerous element, Engels said, consisted of the reformist trade-union leaders “who have so far been kept down or outside by the compact Franco-German majority in the General Council”.²

The only resolution of The Hague congress not entirely in keeping with the line mapped out by Marx and Engels concerned the results of the inquiry into the activities of the Alliance. Marx and Engels had insisted on the Alliance’s expulsion from the International as a body that had rejected its programme and organisational principles and split the world working-class movement. However, the commission of inquiry elected by the congress did not have the time to go through the innumerable documents and was misled by the testimony of the Bakuninists. It did not come to any definite conclusion about the existence of the secret Alliance and confined itself to recommending the expulsion of Bakunin and James Guillaume from the International for their divisive activities. This the congress proceeded to do. Thus, although the other resolutions were a triumph for the programme and organisational principles of scientific communism and an ideological defeat of sectarianism, the question of an organisational separation from the anarchists was not resolved. The anarchists retained the possibility of continuing to operate in and on behalf of the International.

The Hague congress was a major event in the history of the International and the world working-class movement. It consummated the elaboration of the International’s programme on the basis of the ideas of scientific communism. Its resolutions determined not only immediate aims but also the general prospect for the struggle of the working class, orienting it on the conquest of political power, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the building of a classless communist society.

It set the course towards a further strengthening of the unity of the working-class movement, towards the attainment of ideological cohesion on the basis of scientific theory. Moreover, it charted the ways and means of achieving these aims: the creation of an independent political party of the working class in every country. In contrast to the petty-bourgeois, anti-authoritarian theories of the anarchists, the congress amplified and recorded key principles of the proletarian party: centralisation combined with a certain measure of independence of local branches, the mandatory character of general decisions and the Rules, the strict observance of these Rules, the role of the congress and of the leading body elected by it, the impermissibility of divisive activities and the existence in the International-

¹ *The Hague Congress..., Reports and Letters*, p. 111.

² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

al of groups seeking to gain control of the working-class movement and impose its dogmas on the movement.

A considerable advance was thus made towards linking scientific communism to the working-class movement. An unremitting struggle against both anarchism and reformism created the conditions for Marxism's triumph in the working-class movement.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ANARCHISM GROWS SHARPER

While The Hague congress was in session the anarchist camp tightened its unity under the leadership of the Bakuninists. The anarchist delegations held secret conferences regularly, inviting reformists from the British Federal Council, and when the congress ended they held a separate meeting in The Hague. Immediately after the congress they convened a congress of the Jura Federation, which rejected all The Hague resolutions.

The first congress of the anarchists was opened at Saint Imier on September 15, 1872. It was attended by four Spanish Bakuninists, who had participated in The Hague congress, two representatives from the Jura Federation, six delegates from Italy, and two from the French sections in the USA. Although only six of the 15 delegates were from recognised sections of the International, the congress declared that it expressed the views of the "true majority" in the International.

At Saint Imier they formulated the organisational principles for the new association: congresses would only record various viewpoints, the view of the majority would not be binding on the minority, all the resolutions of The Hague congress and the mandates of the General Council would be considered null and void. A special resolution rejected the need for a political struggle and for independent parties of the working class, and also the idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat. It declared that "1)... the first duty of the proletariat is to destroy all political power; 2)... any organisation of a political power, allegedly provisional and revolutionary, with the purpose of carrying out this destruction, would merely be another piece of deceit and would be as dangerous to the proletariat as all the governments existing today."¹

The congress urged "direct contacts" between "free and autonomous" federations for a concerted attack on the General Council. It was announced that an international anti-authoritarian congress would be convened in six months.²

¹ 3^e Résolution. *Nature de l'action politique de prolétariat*. In: *Résolution du Congrès anti-autoritaire tenu à St.-Imier le 15 septembre 1872, Neuchâtel, 1872*.

² The British reformists were among the first to respond to the call of the Bakuninists (John Hales' letters to the anarchist newspaper *Internationale* [October 27, 1872] and *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne* [December 1, 1872]).

The Saint Imier resolutions were promptly recognised by the Jura Federation and the anarchist sections in Switzerland and Italy. In Belgium and Spain they precipitated a sharp ideological struggle. In Spain the New Spanish Federation, formed on the basis of the New Madrid Federation, abided by the resolutions of The Hague Congress. But the old Spanish Federation, which was supported by most of the sections, subscribed to the resolutions of the Saint Imier congress. The Belgian Federation likewise accepted these resolutions.

Describing this situation, Marx and Engels wrote that the split in the International had been proclaimed.¹ They recommended that the General Council should merely declare that all the organisations that had rejected The Hague congress resolutions and the General Rules, had thereby placed themselves outside the International and in effect withdrawn from it. On May 30, 1873, the General Council passed the relevant resolution.²

Further, Marx and Engels published comprehensive critiques of anarchism. These critiques (*Political Indifferentism* by Marx and *On Authority* by Engels)³ laid bare the untenability of the basic Bakuninist dogmas: a negative attitude to the political struggle of the working class; preaching of extreme individualism, of absolute freedom from "authority" of any kind, by which they meant the state (including the proletarian state) and all organisations (including the workers' party), and so forth. Marx and Engels showed the petty-bourgeois class nature of these views, their organic link to the mentality of the small commodity producer-proprietor, reflecting his dread of the development of large-scale industry, his essentially reactionary striving to safeguard his illusory independence against erosion by the centralising tendencies of social development. Engels pointed out that the appearance of large-scale industry was a progressive phenomenon and that after capitalism was abolished industrial development would inevitably result in centralisation, the growth of authority vital for the coordination of action by producers. He wrote that "combined action, the complication of processes dependent upon each other, displaces independent action by individuals. But whoever mentions combined action speaks of organisation; now, is it possible to have organisation without authority?"⁴

¹ *The Hague Congress..., Minutes and Documents*, p. 562.

² Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 693.

³ During the life-time of Marx and Engels these articles were printed only in Italy. They subsequently played a large part as one of Lenin's points of departure in developing the Marxist teaching on the state and revolution. Lenin made a summary of these works from *Neue Zeit* (*Lenin Miscellany XIV*, pp. 340-46 [in Russian]) and then used them for such major works as *The State and Revolution* and *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.

⁴ Frederick Engels, "On Authority", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 376.

Further: "Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power loom in order to return to the spinning wheel."¹

The socialist revolution, of which the anarchists proclaimed themselves the heralds, Engels noted, was in itself an authoritarian action, for "it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets, and cannon—authoritarian means, if such there be at all."² Citing the experience of the Commune, he wrote that the victorious proletariat would not retain its supremacy without the authority of the armed revolutionary masses. Hence the conclusion that "either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they are talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion, or they do know, and in that case they are betraying the movement of the proletariat. In either case they serve the reaction."³

"Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association", a pamphlet written by Marx, Engels, and Lafargue, went a long way towards exposing the theories and practices of the anarchists. It cited documents proving the existence of the secret Bakuninist Alliance, revealed the ugliness of its divisive activities, and made it clear that proletarian revolutionaries could not accept its methods. The pamphlet showed the hollowness of the anarchists' ideas of the future society, which they saw as primitive egalitarianism in the spirit of "barrack communism". It demonstrated that there was a fundamental difference between the Marxist approach to unity of action of the working class and what the anarchists were propounding. "The members of the International," the pamphlet said, "are trying to create this unity by propaganda, by discussion and the public organisation of the proletariat. But all Bakunin needs is a secret organisation of one hundred people, the privileged representatives of the *revolutionary idea*... Unity of thought and action (as seen by Bakunin.—*Author*) means nothing but orthodoxy and blind obedience."⁴

In the article "The Bakuninists at Work", Engels used facts for a critical analysis of the second (after the Lyons rising of 1871) attempt of the Bakuninists to bring their plans to fruition during the 'canton-alist rising of 1873 in Spain. He demonstrated that the application of their adventurist tactics inevitably led to a defeat of the working-class movement, to the failure of democratic reforms. He had every

¹ Ibid., p. 377.

² Ibid., p. 379.

³ Ibid., p. 379.

⁴ *The Hague Congress..., Minutes and Documents*, p. 520.

reason to assert that in Spain the Bakuninists gave "an inimitable example of how *not* to accomplish a revolution".¹

This article contained ideas about the objective conditions for the proletarian revolution, the need for working-class participation in bourgeois-democratic revolutions, the possibility of setting up a provisional revolutionary government with the participation of working-class representatives, and the approach to revolution as an art.

Marx and Engels thus subjected the entire doctrine of anarchism to a devastating criticism. Their works on this subject were a substantive contribution to the development of the theory of scientific communism, promoted the consolidation of its exponents, and were instrumental in gradually winning away from anarchism many personalities, who later become prominent in the socialist working-class movement.

Meanwhile, the anarchists did not cease their efforts to take over the leadership of the working-class movement. This was strikingly demonstrated by their meeting in Geneva in September 1873. Its participants called it a congress of the International, although they were not members of the International either formally or in fact. The new organisation set up by them continued to call itself the International Working Men's Association, and this was indirect testimony of the enormous prestige won by the International in the working-class movement. To proclaim another international workers' organisation in opposition to the International meant to condemn it to isolation. The anarchist architects of the split were quite obviously aware that renunciation of the legacy of the International, which was just what they wanted, was completely at odds with the workers' experience that, thanks to the International, had become the flesh and blood of the movement.

The Geneva congress was attended not only by representatives of anarchists in the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and France, but also by the British reformists Hales and Eccarius. Lassalle's supporters sent the congress a message of greetings. This unprincipled bloc was held together by hostility for Marxism. The rules adopted at this congress abolished the General Council and deprived future congresses of the right to adopt mandatory resolutions. The negation of authority was thus translated into life.

As at subsequent congresses (at Brussels in 1874, at Berne in 1876, and at Verviers in 1877), conflicting views surfaced at Geneva. The predominant influence was exercised by the anarcho-syndicalist or "anarcho-collectivist" trend. Its stand was that property should be transferred to workers' production associations that would en-

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Die Bakunisten an der Arbeit", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 493.

sure an equitable distribution of goods and be the prototype of a social organisation of the future. The anarcho-syndicalists regarded the general strike as their principal weapon. However, at the congress there also were representatives of champions of private property (imitators of Proudhon), "peaceful" anarchists, who held that revolution in people's minds was the immediate task, and exponents of anarcho-communism, who maintained that ownership and the distribution of goods were the prerogative of society. The latter two schools gradually gained ground.

In the meantime, as the working-class movement gathered momentum, some leading personalities of the anarchist groups were becoming inclined to abandon the dogmas of anarchism. At the Brussels congress this tendency was seen in the report "On the Organisation of the Future Society" delivered by César de Paepe. In an effort to find a way out of the conflict between the anarchist negation of society as such and the ideas of anarcho-communism, he declared that the future society would need organisation, that it would be a "workers' state" controlling the "public services": the judiciary, the police, the public health system, social insurance, communications, capital construction, and so on.¹ The attitude adopted by this prominent figure of the working-class movement was evidence not only of his own return to the revolutionary stand of the proletariat but also of the growing crisis of anarchist ideology. At the next few congresses some Belgian, French, and even Italian delegates abandoned their former sweeping negation of proletarian political activity and condemnation of social-democratic parties.

The ideological differences among the anarchists and the fact that anarchism was losing the following of large segments of workers (in North Italy, Belgium, and France, and, to a lesser extent, in Spain) brought about the disintegration of the anarchist international association. The anarchists convened conferences in the 1880s-1890s but were unable to breathe life into their movement. As an organised international force anarchism lay exhausted, although the anarcho-syndicalist movement had sunk fairly deep roots in a number of countries.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

The processes that were taking place in the first half of the 1870s in the working-class movement and the prevailing conditions for that movement's development called in question the existence of the First International. The form which at an earlier stage was embodied

¹ César de Paepe, *De l'organisation des services publics dans la société future*, Brussels, 1874; *Compte-rendu officiel de VII-e Congrès Général de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs tenu à Bruxelles, Verviers, 1874*.

by the International Working Men's Association with its generally small sections was no longer workable. It was vital to go over to a new form of organisation, i.e., to set up mass political parties of the proletariat. This was most strikingly demonstrated by the Paris Commune. The programme of the working-class movement, worked out by that time with the principles of scientific communism as its basis, was initially realisable only on a national scale. This move was also demanded by the natural differentiation of the various working-class organisations: political, professional, cultural-educational, and so forth. It was only with the development of national contingents, chiefly of the political parties, that the working-class movement could, as Marx and Engels foresaw,¹ revive the international proletarian organisation on a new and higher level.

Marx pointed out that the International was only the first attempt to set up for the international activity of the proletariat "a central organ ... an attempt which was a lasting success on account of the impulse which it gave but which was no longer realisable in its *first historical form* after the fall of the Paris Commune".² To a large extent this was due to the repressions. In most European countries no organisation of any noteworthy size could exist if it openly declared its affiliation to the International. Another factor was subversion by the Bakuninists, the consequence of which was a split in the various sections. All these developments were brought to light by the International's last congress, convened in Geneva in September 1873, it was attended by only 28 delegates, of whom 26 were from Switzerland.

This congress reaffirmed the Hague resolutions stating that the proletariat had to conduct a political struggle, win power, set up its political parties, and so forth. Realistically assessing the situation, it passed a resolution, which stated in part: "While recommending that the working class should participate in any policy aimed at emancipating the workers, the Congress authorises the International's members in different countries to act in accordance with circumstances."³ Marx amplified this, writing on September 27, 1873: "As I view European conditions it is quite useful to let the formal organisation of the International recede into the background for the time being."⁴

¹ Marx to Friedrich Adolph Sorge, September 27, 1873, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 269.

² Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 22.

³ *Der Volksstaat*, September 24, 1873.

⁴ Marx to Friedrich Adolph Sorge, September 27, 1873, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 268. The International Working Men's Association was officially dissolved at the Philadelphia Conference on July 15, 1876.

The years the First International was in existence were a period of the steady growth of the working-class movement, of its consciousness and activity. On the basis of this growth, of the experience acquired by the workers in their joint struggle, Marx and Engels secured recognition for the ideas of scientific communism, for the Marxist programme and organisational principles in the International. This was the main result of the work accomplished by that organisation.

Evidence of this was the wide (by the standards of those years) dissemination of the works of Marx and Engels. Thousands of workers in Europe and the United States read the *Inauguration Manifesto* and *Rules of the International*, the appeals and addresses of the General Council written by Marx, and the new printings of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Marx's basic work—the first volume of *Capital*—and its first translations into foreign languages (Russian in 1872 and then French) were published.¹ *The Civil War in France* was translated into the principal European languages. According to the testimony of the workers' press, documents of local and general congresses, the records of sittings of the General Council, and the basic propositions of scientific theory became accessible to the proletarian masses, making them reject bourgeois-reformist and petty-bourgeois utopian theories. The propositions that, to use Lenin's words, entered "into the flesh and blood"² of the working-class movement included those that declared that the proletariat was the grave-digger of capitalism and the force capable of building a new social system, that the proletarian movement had to achieve class independence, that the proletariat had to be united worldwide, that the economic and political struggles of the workers had to be combined with support for democratic and national liberation movements, and that the revolutionary overthrow of the old system was inevitable.

Meanwhile, theory continued to be developed and enriched by the experience of the mass working-class movement. In works written at this period Marx and Engels considered the objective character and forms of the international unity of the working-class movement, the question of allies of the working class, the question of the proletarian party and the principles underlying its organisation, the question of the proletarian dictatorship and the destiny of the state.

¹ *Essays on the History of the Ideological Struggle Over Marx's "Capital" 1867-1967*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 51-94 (in Russian). The dissemination of the works of Marx and Engels is dealt with in *Editions of the Works of Marx and Engels Published in Their Lifetime, Bibliographical Index*, Part, 1, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 177.

They formulated the key proposition that there were three forms of the working-class struggle: economic, political, and ideological.

The various schools of utopian socialism folded up during this period, although their influence was still to be finally eradicated. This was seen in the fairly wide dissemination of anarchism and the reformist ideology of trade-unionism (Britain and some other countries). Also, this was seen in the fact that far from all of Marxism's ideas were recognised. Nevertheless, the First International had created a solid foundation for Marxism's development into the predominant trend in the working-class movement. The International, as Lenin noted, "laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for socialism".¹ It gave a powerful impetus for the development of all forms of struggle by the proletariat and its organisations, stated that the proletariat had to form its own political parties, and influenced the creation of the German Social-Democratic Labour Party; the first attempts were made to set up analogous parties in other countries. It was the motor behind the development of trade unions.

The exposure of "left sectarianism" (particularly Bakuninism)² and reformism by Marx and Engels is of unfading significance. The working-class movement acquired valuable experience of ideological struggle against influences alien to it.

During the period the First International was in existence and thanks to it the working class came forward for the first time as a factor of international importance, evolving into an influential force of world development. Hundreds of thousands of workers came to realise that in their struggle against exploiters and enslavers they had the same aims and tasks and came to regard themselves as fighters of the united army of the international proletariat. This was one of the primary accomplishments of the International, which used the principles of proletarian internationalism as the guideline of its activities. The operation of these principles was seen most vividly in the movement of solidarity of workers of different countries with the Paris Commune.

Marxist ideas penetrated what in those years were the most remote parts of the world, reaching out to as far as Australia and Latin America. The International and its ideas strongly influenced the Russian revolutionary movement. In many countries the proletariat produced revolutionaries, brilliant orators, distinguished journalists, and outstanding organisers, whose names are honoured in world history.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History" *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 307.

² Jacques Duclos, *Bakounine et Marx, Ombre et Lumière*, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1974.

If we compare the state of the working-class movement in 1864 and in 1873, we shall find an indisputably huge shift from dismemberment to unity, from vagueness about the aims and means of struggle to the assertion of communist ideals, from spontaneous protests to conscious and meaningful struggle, from dreams of a crust of bread to a heroic "storming of the heavens"—the Paris Commune, the first attempt to reshape the world.

The significance of the experience and lessons that enriched the proletariat during the years the First International was in existence is everlasting. Throughout its subsequent development the working-class and communist movement relied on them in its struggle for international unity among workers, the triumph of socialist ideals, a durable alliance with large segments of working people, and the creative amplification of the ideas of scientific socialism. This was what Lenin meant when he said that the First International "is unforgettable, it will remain for ever in the history of the workers' struggle for their emancipation".¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speeches on Gramophone Records", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 240

Part Three

THE WORKING-CLASS AND SOCIALIST MOVEMENT AFTER THE PARIS COMMUNE

Chapter 5

THE PROLETARIAT ACCUMULATES STRENGTH

Despite the difficulties that followed the defeat of the Paris Commune, the optimistic assessment that Marx and Engels gave of the prospects for the working-class struggle was borne out entirely by succeeding developments. In spite of the efforts of European reaction the working-class movement as a whole was not stopped. On the contrary, it made noteworthy progress.

International proletarian links continued to grow, albeit in different forms. The reciprocal sending of delegations to party congresses became commonplace, and leaders of the working-class movement began to contribute more to the socialist press in other countries. This helped to provide better information on the state of the liberation struggle and foster exchanges of experience between socialist organisations. Marx and Engels played an outstanding part in preserving and developing international proletarian links. Wherever there was an organised working-class movement threads stretched from it to them, in London. During these years at least 70 militants of the working-class movement corresponded with them. They supported the international actions taken by trade unions and socialist parties, and generalised and disseminated the experience of the liberation struggle.

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT ON THE THRESHOLD ON THE LAST QUARTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the 1870s the Social-Democratic Party of Germany was the largest and most organised political contingent of the international working class. After the Franco-Prussian War and the fall of the Paris Commune the "centre of the movement shifted to Germany".¹ This was due to objective circumstances. As early as July 1870 Marx wrote that "the German working class has surpassed

¹ Engels and Conrad Schmidt 12. April 1890, Marx/Engels, *Werke* Bd 37, S. 384.

the French in terms of theory and organisation".¹ Germany was at the time the only country where a workers' party founded on the principles of scientific communism was already in existence. It was headed by Wilhelm Liebknecht, August Bebel, Wilhelm Bracke, and other distinguished revolutionaries popular among the workers. The stand taken by advanced German workers during the war, their unambiguous internationalist attitude to Bismarck's policy of aggrandisement, and their courageous, resolute actions in defence of the Paris Commune placed them in the van of the liberation struggle. "During this war," Engels wrote in December 1870, "the German workers displayed such perspicacity and energy that at once placed them at the head of the European working-class movement."² Although Lassalleanism was still strong among a segment of the German workers, Marxism won a larger following in the German than in the other working-class movements. Although Germany's unification had taken place under reactionary Prussian leadership, this objectively created the conditions for organising the workers nation-wide. For its part, the semi-absolutist Bismarck regime—the German variety of Bonapartism—brought about a further aggravation of class contradictions.

Attempts to form proletarian parties were made in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in the mid-1870s. The United Social-Democratic Party of Austria was constituted in April 1874. Its programme was based on the Eisenach programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany. For a multinational country like Austria-Hungary it was particularly significant that the programme demanded the right to self-determination for the peoples inhabiting it. However, sharp differences soon caused this party to split into individual groups.

In Hungary the formation of a workers' party was announced in March 1873. But it was at once banned by the authorities and thus denied the possibility of engaging in any notable activity. However, its newspaper, *Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik*, published in Hungarian and German, continued to appear and was the centre around which the socialist forces grouped themselves.³

In other countries the political organisation of the proletariat was still at its embryonic stage.

In Britain the labour movement continued developing exclusively within the framework of trade-unionism.

¹ Marx an Engels 20. Juli 1870, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 5.

² Engels an Natalie Liebknecht 19. Dezember 1870, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 167.

³ *History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Working-Class Movement*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1970, p. 25; B. I. Zhelitsky, *The Socialist Working-Class Movement in Hungary, 1873-1890*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 86-101 (both in Russian).

In France, where terror reigned after the fall of the Commune, the resurgent working-class organisations were initially purely professional and concentrated exclusively on an economic struggle. The first national workers' congress with economic questions on its agenda was convened in Paris in 1876 on the initiative of trade unions (*chambres syndicales*). This congress, which, according to its sponsors, represented nearly a million workers, rejected revolutionary methods of struggle, declared itself against strikes, and proclaimed that the principal way to emancipate the proletariat was to organise the workers in consumers' and producers' cooperatives on the pattern of the trade unions. Moreover, it pledged support for the republican form of government and sharply condemned reactionary clericalism.

In the further development of the French working-class movement an important role was played by revolutionary emigres, who increasingly leaned towards the ideas of scientific socialism. They included future founders of the Workers' Party (*Parti Ouvrier*): Jules Guesde, formerly an anarchist, Paul Lafargue, who was prominent in the International Working Men's Association, and a group of Blanquists headed by Edouard Vaillant.

In the small West European countries—Belgium and the Netherlands—the working-class movement remained fragmented. After anarchist tendencies got the upper hand in the Belgian sections of the International they entered a period of decline and stagnation that persisted until the mid-1870s. In the Netherlands, following the dissolution of the International, the movement developed mainly within the framework of the General Netherlands Workers' Union, which was ideologically influenced by the liberal bourgeoisie and opposed not only revolutionary methods of struggle but also strikes.

In the Scandinavian countries there was no organised working-class movement worth mentioning. Only in Denmark was there a federation of the International with sections in almost all towns.

In Switzerland the First General National Workers' Congress was held in the spring of 1873 on the initiative of the Zurich Central Committee of Trade Unions, the mutual-aid funds, and the sickness funds. The delegates represented roughly 10,000 workers, including some sections of the International, various workers' vereins (societies), trade unions, and branches of the Grütli Verein, which was influenced by the liberal bourgeoisie despite its proletarian composition. This congress proclaimed the formation of the Swiss Labour Union with a programme that contained provisions close to the platform of the International. It was also attended by some representatives of the Bakuninist Jura Federation, but they exercised no influence whatever on the resolutions. The Union prepared the groundwork for the subsequent founding of a Socialist Party.

In Italy the Mazzini organisations affiliated to the Fraternal League of Workers' Societies lost most of their influence. The Bakuninists dominated the working-class movement for some time, but after the abortive risings organised by them in 1874 the Italian sections of the anarchist International were disbanded. By the mid-1870s the Italian sections of the International Working Men's Association likewise ceased to exist. Small groups of supporters of Marx and Engels continued to function in only a few cities. The character of the mass struggle of the Italian workers was largely spontaneous.

In Spain the working-class organisations were disbanded following the defeat of the revolution of 1868-1874 and the re-establishment of the monarchy. Only a few trade unions continued to function, mainly in Catalonia, where they were under anarchist influence, and in Madrid.

Most of the Balkan states had no organised working-class movement in the mid-1870s. The strike struggle was swiftly spreading in the Kingdom of Poland and in the Polish territories of the German empire and Austria-Hungary. The first half of the 1870s witnessed strikes in Warsaw, Lodz, and some towns in Silesia and Galicia. This period was also marked by attempts to set up trade unions, mutual-aid societies, and other organisations. But the Polish workers had no political organisations.¹

In Russia the various workers' actions were aimed mainly at improving working conditions and winning higher wages. The number of strikes grew markedly in the first half of the 1870s.² Of these particularly wide publicity was received by a strike at the Krenholm Manufactory in Narva, which employed nearly 6,000 workers. This action was triggered by an outbreak of cholera on account of the unsanitary housing, the backbreaking labour, and the meagre food. In August 1872 the workers presented their demands to the management and got some concessions. But soon afterwards some of the "instigators" were arrested on the insistence of the owners. In response a protest strike was staged on September 11. Troops were called and these suppressed the strike. Many workers were dismissed and upwards of 20 were sentenced to hard labour or imprisonment.³

Although the strikes of these years were spontaneous they helped to awaken the class consciousness of the workers. "The workers," Lenin wrote, "were losing their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them and began ... I shall not say to

¹ *A History of Poland*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1955, pp. 250-56 (in Russian).

² *A History of the Working Class of Russia, 1861-1900*, Moscow, 1972, p. 86 (in Russian).

³ *The Working-Class Movement in Russia in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. II. Part I, Moscow, 1950, pp. 349-50; *The Krenholm Strike of 1872*, A Collection of Documents and Other Materials, Tallinn, 1952 (both in Russian).

understand, but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, definitely abandoning their slavish submission to the authorities."¹

The efforts of the revolutionary Narodniks (Populists)² helped in some measure to draw the more active workers into a conscious political struggle. They destroyed the illusions about the tsar with the result that revolutionary ideas were embraced by more advanced proletarians. This was strikingly illustrated by the celebrated speech delivered by a worker named Pyotr Alexeyev at the trial of the Social-Revolutionary Organisation of Russia in March 1877. For the ruling circles there was an ominous ring in his words that the "brawny hand of millions of workers will rise and the yoke of despotism, guarded by bayonets, will crumble into dust".³

Outside Europe there was a working-class movement of a size worth noting only in the USA and also in Canada and Australia; in some Australian industries the workers were the first in the history of the world working-class movement to win an eight-hour working day. In the USA, following the dissolution of the National Workers' Union in 1872, attempts were made to form a new national association, but these had little success. True, there was the secret Order of the Knights of Labor (formed in 1869), whose declared aim was to unite the workers for the defence of their interests and for the total emancipation of the creators of wealth from oppression and the calamities of wage labour.⁴ But right until the mid-1870s the Order was numerically small and had little influence.

Headway towards the formation of a socialist party was made in the USA during the early 1870s: the Workingmen's Party of Illinois (1873) and the Social-Democratic Workingmen's Party of North America (1874) sprang from sections of the International. These two parties had a membership consisting mainly of immigrant workers (chiefly from Germany) with followers of Lassalle predominating among them.

In Canada, then the only British colony enjoying Dominion status (since 1867), there were a few trade unions at the beginning of the 1870s. In 1872 they received official (legislative) recognition and in the next year the first attempt was made to set up a national association, the Canadian National Labour Union.

Thus, in the mid-1870s an organised working-class movement was in existence in one form or another only in some European countries, and in the USA, Canada, and Australia. But everywhere more

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 374-75.

² See Chapter 7.

³ *Revolutionary Populism of the 1870s*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1964, pp. 366-67 (in Russian).

⁴ L. I. Zubok, *Essays on the History of the Labour Movement in the USA, 1865-1918*, Moscow, 1962, p. 114 (in Russian).

workers were joining the struggle, everywhere the workers were endeavouring to form organisations of their own that could uphold their demands and interests, and everywhere the advanced workers were gravitating towards knowledge, towards the ideas of socialism. Trade unions, mutual-aid societies, insurance funds, and other organisations continued to spring up with the purpose of improving the working and living conditions of the working class and protecting their economic interests.

Also, attempts were made to found independent proletarian political parties with socialist programmes. In some cases such parties were formed with substantial assistance from sections of the International and with the participation of cadres trained by it.

But socialist ideas were only beginning to penetrate the proletarian ranks. Large segments of workers were still far from understanding the causes of their condition. As a rule the struggle waged by them was confined to attempts to secure better terms for the sale of their labour. Even in countries where relatively large organisations of the trade-union type were already functioning (for instance, Britain and the USA) they united only a small proportion of the workers, serving not the class interests of the proletariat but the narrow professional, shop interests of individual groups of workers, primarily of the most skilled ones.

Although the working class was unquestionably advancing towards organisation, scientific socialism was only beginning to strike root in the working-class movement. There was noteworthy progress in this area during the next decades.

THE MASS PROLETARIAN STRUGGLE SPREADS

The working-class movement entered a new phase in the latter half of the 1870s. The stand taken by the proletariat and its revolutionary militant potential were becoming an important factor of public life. "... The working-class movement has forced itself more and more into the *foreground* of every day politics,"¹ Engels wrote in 1878.

The *strike movement*, which assumed colossal proportions and strength, was an indicator of the changes that were taking place. Whereas formerly strikes were a response of wagedworkers to the intolerable terms of the sale of labour and were staged only when the situation was particularly bad, the proletariat of many countries now had recourse to strikes as a common, generally accepted form of countering capitalist exploitation. No longer an extraordinary occurrence, they became, at least for the most organised con-

¹ *The Labor Standard*, NY, 3.III.1878.

tingents of the industrial proletariat, part and parcel and an important form of the class struggle.

A feature distinguishing many of the strikes at the close of the 1870s and in the 1880s was their *dimension and duration*. Not a few ran for weeks and even months. For instance, there was an eight-week strike in 1875 by 15,000 textile workers in Fall River, USA. In the same year, Pennsylvania miners were on strike for seven months. In 1878 a 10-week strike paralysed Lancashire (Britain) textile mills and involved up to 300,000 workers at its peak. A five-week struggle was waged in 1889 by 60,000 dockers, seamen, stokers, and workers of other trades employed at the London docks and shipyards. "Not since the high and palmy days of Chartism," George Julian Harney, an old Chartist leader, wrote, "have I witnessed any movement corresponding in importance and interest to the great strike of 1889."¹ In Berlin 25,000 bricklayers and carpenters struck for two months in 1888. In 1889 roughly 150,000 German miners fought for their rights for more than a month. The 1886 strike by 2,000 miners of Decazeville, France, lasted nearly five months.

There were large strikes also in the 1890s. In Germany 20,000 Ruhr miners staged a strike in 1891, and in the following year there was a strike by 25,000 miners in the Saar. In 1896 there were almost 500 strikes involving 130,000 workers.

In France 24,000 Roubaix textile workers downed tools in May 1890, and in the following year almost all the workers of the French glass industry went on strike.

In the USA several hundred thousand workers took part in strikes in 1894. The largest of these was the nation-wide strike, started by Pullman workers (Illinois) and involving 150,000 people.

These were usually economic strikes, or, in any case, most were over economic demands. The causes of the majority were low wages, deplorable working and living conditions, and oppression by managements and individual capitalists. The demands put forward by strikers in different countries were largely analogous: higher wages, a ten- and then an eight-hour working day, sickness, disability, and old-age insurance, restrictions on the employment of female and child labour, mandatory labour safety, responsibility of employers for industrial accidents, abolition of fines, better housing, and so on.

However, almost invariably the big strikes went beyond the economic struggle, inspired workers with faith in their own strength, steeled them, and reinforced their belief that further energetic struggles were necessary. Intervention by the authorities on the side of employers, sometimes in the most brutal manner, was the best agitation for a political organisation of the proletariat.

¹ A. L. Morton and George Tate, *The British Labour Movement, 1770-1920, A History*, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., London, 1956, p. 192.

To combat strikes the capitalists and the authorities had recourse to provocations, terrorised workers, and frequently called in troops. A "classical" example of this was the way in which the 1875 Pennsylvania miners' strike was crushed. The owners "unleashed a reign of terror, hiring and arming a band of vigilantes ... who joined the corporation-owned Coal and Iron Police in waylaying, ambushing, and killing militant miners".¹ On trumped-up charges 19 leaders of the strike were sentenced to death and executed.

May 1886 has left an indelible mark in the history of the US working-class movement.² That year a wave of demonstrations swept across the nation from New York to San Francisco: the principal demand was an eight-hour working day. Chicago found itself in the centre of the struggle: on May 1 the streets were filled with 40,000 strikers, an impressive number for those times. Well-organised and peaceful, the demonstrations and strikes went on for two more days. But on May 3 the police used a clash between striking workers and strike-breakers at the McCormick farm machinery plant as the pretext for firing on the workers. Six were killed and 50 wounded.

A mass rally to protest this heinous action took place on the next day in the city's central square. Leaders of the Chicago workers addressed the rally, stigmatising the police, drawing attention to the probability of the authorities resorting to further acts of violence, and calling upon the workers to display firmness, calmness, and organisation. The police appeared a few minutes before the rally was to be closed. An unidentified person threw a bomb into the square, killing one policeman and wounding five others. The police opened fire, shooting down and manhandling workers.

The authorities followed up the bloody events in Chicago with an unbridled campaign of baiting the working-class and progressive movements throughout the nation, making innumerable arrests. Eight leaders of the Chicago workers—Albert R. Parsons, August Spies, Samuel J. Fielden, Eugene Schwab, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Louis Ling, and Oscar Neebe—were tried. They were charged with murder, although all, with the exception of Fielden, had left the square before the bomb was thrown. The jury was hand-picked from among persons who took no pains to conceal their hatred for progressives. The principal witnesses, as it later transpired, had been bribed.

The defendants displayed courage and dignity. They not only defended themselves but also accused the authorities. Parsons, who had escaped arrest, appeared in court and took his place beside hi

¹ Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*, Cameron Associates, New York, 1955, p. 51.

² S. M. Askoldova, *The Beginning of the Mass Working-Class Movement in the USA (1880s)*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 188-201 (in Russian).

comrades, well aware of the consequences. The court sentenced seven to be hanged, and the eighth—Oscar Neebe—to 15 years' imprisonment.

As the day of execution approached the movement in defence of the condemned men spread far beyond the nation's frontiers. Petitions appealing for a mitigation of the sentence came from all parts of the world. Under pressure of these protests the governor of Illinois commuted the death sentence for Fielden and Schwab to life imprisonment.

The day before the execution Louis Ling, one of the youngest of the condemned men, took his own life. On November 11, 1887 Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, and Adolph Fischer were hanged. They met their death heroically. Spies' last words were: "There will come a time when our silence will be more eloquent than our words."

Fielden, Schwab, and Neebe were released in 1893. The new governor of Illinois John P. Altgeld acknowledged that their guilt had not been proven and that like their executed revolutionary comrades they had been victims of a biased hand-picked jury and an unfair trial.

A huge railwaymen's strike in the eastern part of the USA in 1887 developed into a tragedy. In some cities the authorities sent regular troops against the strikers. Scores were killed and many were wounded.

Provocation and armed violence became common instruments against the strike movement in Europe as well. Troops suppressed strikes by miners and other workers in Belgium (March 1886). Police provocations were used as the pretext for the arrest and sentencing of militant miners in the Monceaux-les-mines basin (France) in 1884.

During the big Ruhr miners' strike in May 1889, troops were called and these repeatedly resorted to violence, slaying at least 15 miners.

Violence accompanied the strike struggle in the Czech lands of Austria, where the strikes were in most cases started by miners. Interference by troops and police compelled them to end a strike that commenced in early 1882. Even greater tensions were generated by the events in the industrial region of Witkowitz and Moravska Ostrava in April 1892, when miners and metalworkers demanded a shorter working day and permission to mark May Day. Troops were called, and in the clashes with them nine workers were killed and many wounded. The strike spilled over into the Plzen mining region, where troops fired on strikers, killing 13 and seriously wounding three. But even after these atrocities the strike, in which 30,000 workers were involved, continued and was ended only after the owners

promised to meet the workers' demands (this promise was never fulfilled).¹

The workers saw that strikes were a powerful and fairly effective weapon in the struggle for socio-economic demands. But often strikers had to return to work without getting any results on account of material difficulties, poor organisation, direct interference by the authorities and, in some cases, the conciliatory stand of their leaders. In the USA the proportion of unsuccessful strikes fluctuated between 34 and 57 per cent in the 1880s, and from 35 to 76 per cent in the next decade. In France the proportion fluctuated in the 1890s from 65 per cent (1890) to 17 per cent (1899). In many cases strikers had to agree to a compromise, to rest content with a partial satisfaction of their demands. In the USA, for instance, the proportion of such strikes in the 1880s varied from 3 (1884) to 25 per cent (1889), and in the 1890s from 8 (1891 and 1892) to 37 per cent (1897).

Big strikes were of especial significance. Even if they did not end successfully for the workers, they compelled the capitalists and the ruling circles to do something about social legislation. The *practical effect of the strike movement* was thus, on the whole, far greater than might have been expected, judging from the direct outcome of individual strikes.

In the USA the big strikes and demonstrations of the spring of 1886, in which altogether nearly 350,000 persons took part, brought roughly 185,000 workers an eight-hour working day. Moreover, the working day of 200,000 workers was shortened from 12 to 9-10 hours.²

A strike by 12,000 Berlin stonemasons in 1885 won for them a reduction of the working day to 10 hours and a higher hourly wage rate. After a ten-week strike in August-September 1886 the blacksmiths of Hamburg got a 10-hour working day without pay reductions. Strikes by London dockers and gasworks employees in 1889 ended with the granting of most of their demands. A strike by 4,500 railway workers in Missouri, USA, in the spring of 1885, averted a contemplated 10-per-cent wage cut.

Strikes brought the power of proletarian solidarity home to the workers. Almost every more or less sizable strike had wide repercussions, frequently even outside the country concerned. The workers did not confine themselves to expressions of sympathy and moral support. In many instances strikers could rely on material assistance from their class brothers in foreign countries. The traditions in this sphere, dating back to the years the International Working Men's Asso-

¹ Julius Deutsch, *Geschichte der österreichischen Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, Vol. 1, Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Wien, 1929, S. 226-28.

² True, the employers later used the deterioration of the economic situation to lengthen the working day.

ciation was in existence, continued to develop successfully on a larger scale than before. For example, a sum of £ 50,000 was collected during the famous London dockers' strike of 1889. Of this sum £30,000 came from Australian trade unions. Innumerable solidarity strikes were staged. Organised Belgian workers prevented British entrepreneurs from recruiting strike-breakers in Belgium.

An important role was played in the strike movement by the socialist and workers' press. Newspapers frequently organised the collection of funds in aid of strikers. They reported the course of each strike, explained its substance and aims, and urged proletarian solidarity.

The strike movement reinforced unity among workers and fostered their *organisation*, a fact that was in large measure the result of the efforts of the socialist parties and the trade unions. Thanks to them, spontaneous proletarian actions, sometimes begun for an outwardly insignificant reason, in many cases became purposeful, organised, sharp, and far-reaching.

The above-mentioned Decazeville miners' strike in 1886 began spontaneously in reply to arbitrary action by the management, which was forcing workers to buy over-priced and inferior-quality goods at the factory-run stores out of their pay. However, this strike acquired nation-wide significance and there were repercussions in foreign countries. An interpellation in parliament by a small group of left deputies regarding the Decazeville strike led to their virtual separation from the radical faction to which they had belonged, and to the formation of an independent workers' group, the embryo of the future socialist faction. Engels called this a "historic event",¹ seeing the interpellation as the first bold independent action of the French proletariat in the Chamber of Deputies.

The 1889 miners' strike in Germany went a long way towards strengthening workers' organisations. Its most significant outcome was the formation of the very big miners' union of Rhine-Westphalia. The influence of the Social-Democratic Party, which had from the outset been active in conducting strikes, rose steeply. At the Reichstag elections in February 1890 its candidates in the Ruhr area polled between eight and ten times more votes than in the preceding elections.

An even greater impulse was given to working-class organisation by the strikes of the London dockers and gasworks employees in 1889. A direct result of these strikes was the formation of unions of miners, gasworks employees and unskilled workers, which became known as the "new trade unions".

¹ Engels an Paul Lafargue, 16. Februar 1886, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 448; Engels an August Bebel, 15. Februar 1886, S. 447.

In the mid-1880s the *struggle for an eight-hour working day* acquired a mass character. In the USA the most determined action was taken by workers of big industrial centres—Chicago, New York, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Cincinnati and, to a lesser extent, Boston, Pittsburgh, Washington, and St. Louis. Towards the close of the decade and particularly, in the 1890s, the eight-hour working day became one of the most important strike demands in Europe.

These years also witnessed purely political strikes. In Belgium, for example, the dispersal by the gendarmerie and the police of a workers' demonstration in Liège, held to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Paris Commune, sparked a massive strike that was joined by the miners of the coal basins of Charleroi and Borinage and by workers of metallurgical and glass factories. There were clashes with the police. Many strikers were arrested and sentenced to long terms of hard labour.

A strike with political undertones was staged by miners in Carmaux, France, in August-October 1892. It was triggered by the sacking of a mechanic of 20 years' seniority named Calvignac, who was elected mayor of the town. The miners saw this as a violation of their suffrage rights. They demanded the reinstatement of Calvignac and ten miners who had been sentenced for an attempt to force the management to rescind its decision. The strike lasted 80 days and held the attention of the entire nation. Some 1,500 gendarmes and troops were sent against 2,800 unarmed miners. But this had no effect and in the long run the authorities had to meet the strikers' demands. The Carmaux action was the first political strike of the French proletariat and it strongly affected the further course of the socialist movement in France.

In the 1890s there was an increase of the number of strikes combining economic and political demands. This was a direct result of the proletariat's heightened class consciousness and better organisation.

In some countries the mass strike struggle was coupled with the movement for universal suffrage. This was seen most vividly in Belgium, where universal suffrage was demanded by the Workers' Party soon after it was founded in the latter half of the 1880s. In May 1891 universal suffrage was demanded by 100,000 miners, whose strike paralysed the nation's entire coal industry. Two years later, when the Chamber of Deputies rejected a motion proposing the introduction of universal suffrage, the leadership of the Workers' Party called for a general strike. Roughly 250,000 persons (about 35 per cent of the Belgian proletariat) stopped work. The strike was accompanied by rallies and demonstrations. Europe had never seen a strike of this magnitude. The ruling classes had to beat a retreat. A week after the strike commenced the parliament passed a law granting universal male suffrage, thereby increasing the number of vot-

ers nearly tenfold. This success of the Belgian working people clearly showed that the mass political strike was a potent weapon in the hands of a militant working class.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century also witnessed a *geographical expansion of the strike struggle*. It was increasingly joined by the proletariat of countries where capitalist development had started later than in others. One of these countries was Russia. In the first half of the 1880s upwards of 100 strikes were staged in Russia with the involvement of nearly 100,000 persons (or more than throughout the 1870s). In the latter half of that decade the number of strikers rose to almost 223,000.¹

During that period the majority of the strikers were workers of the textile industry, which was then the most highly developed in Russia. Exploitation was particularly brutal in that industry. The workers of the Krenholm Manufactory in Narva staged another strike in 1882. In January 1885 tools were downed by 11,000 workers at Morozov's Nikolskaya Manufactory in Orekhovo-Zuyevo. This strike was the most important action of the working-class movement of Russia in the 1880s. It was headed by a group of advanced struggle-tested workers led by P. Moiseyenko. The cause of the strike was the repeated wage cuts and, especially, abuse of fines, which deprived the workers of up to a quarter of their wages. The strikers displayed a high degree of organisation and staunchness. Their demands (in particular, for legislation completely revising the terms of hire) were the first in the history of the working-class movement in Russia to go beyond the framework of a single enterprise. "This huge strike," Lenin wrote, "made a very great impression on the government, which saw that when the workers act in unison they constitute a dangerous force."² A law on fines, based on the demands put forward by the Morozov strike, was promulgated in 1886.³

In the early 1890s strikes were staged by workers of engineering and textile factories in St. Petersburg, and of textile mills in Moscow and in Moscow Gubernia. In 1890 there was a strike by 5,000 workers of the Bolshaya Yaroslavl Manufactory, and in the spring of 1893 by several thousand workers of the Yegoryevsk Manufactory, and in June of the same year by 4,500 workers of the Tver Manufactory.

Proletarians of the Kingdom of Poland also joined in the strike struggle. The Zirardowski Manufactory near Warsaw was stopped by

¹ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1964, p. 96 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Explanation of the Law on Fines Imposed on Factory Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 37.

³ *An Outline History of the Working-Class Movement in Russia (1861-1917)*, Moscow, 1962, from p. 122 (in Russian).

a strike in 1883 involving 8,000 workers. The police tried to disrupt the strike by arresting workers. Troops opened fire on the strikers. Nevertheless, the owners had to make concessions: they abandoned their intention of slashing wages and agreed to pay the workers for the time taken by the strike. This was the first massive, militant, and successful strike of the Polish proletariat.¹

Workers of eight factories in Lodz, a large Polish industrial centre, went on strike on May 2, 1891. By May 6 this strike had been joined by nearly 80,000 workers in Zgierz, Pabianice, Widzew, Chojna, Radogoscie, Zawiercie. Martial law was declared in Lodz. Some 40,000 troops were brought into the city and in the clashes 200 strikers were killed, and hundreds were wounded or arrested. These developments had repercussions throughout Russia. St. Petersburg workers sent an open letter to their Polish class brothers, denouncing the tsarist autocracy and the Russian and Polish bourgeoisie, who were oppressing Russian and Polish proletarians. "We send you ... our brothers, Polish workers of Lodz and other towns," the letter said, "our heartfelt greetings and declaration of solidarity with your struggle against this foul capitalist oppression"; expressing the hope that "the last hour of our enemies will soon come and the sun of the socialist system will rise", the St. Petersburg workers assured their Polish brothers that "when the tsar is done away with we will prove to you that there is no enmity between the Russian and Polish peoples".²

In the Czech lands there was a significant expansion of the strike movement in the 1890s, particularly in the latter half of that decade. The strikes in these regions accounted for a large proportion of stoppages in the Austria of those years (55.8 per cent in 1898 and even 82.9 per cent in 1899). As before, the miners were in the front rank. A hard-fought struggle for a shorter working day, for a weekly (instead of a monthly) pay packet, and higher wages unfolded in the Ostrava-Karvina coal basin in February through March 1896. As in 1892, there were 30,000 strikers and these displayed staunchness, organisation, and a sense of internationalism. This time the employers gained nothing from calling out troops to the basin. The strikers were partially successful, but their demand for a shorter working day was not met. This foreshadowed a renewal of the struggle (it did indeed break out in early 1900).³

¹ *A History of Poland*, Vol. II, pp. 278-79.

² N. Pukhlov, "The Working-Class Movement in Poland in the 1890s", *From the History of the Polish Working-Class Movement*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 35-36 (in Russian).

³ I. P. Ivanov, "The Working-Class Movement in the Czech Lands at the Close of the 1890s", *From the History of the Revolutionary Movement of the Peoples of Czechoslovakia*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 95-98 (in Russian).

The Balkan countries were drawn into the movement. A wave of railwaymen's strikes rolled across Serbia and Romania in the latter part of the 1890s. In Bulgaria textile workers, printers, and tobacco industry workers staged strikes in the early 1890s.

The close of the 1870s and the 1880s saw the first and as yet spontaneous actions of the Japanese proletariat against exhausting labour and appalling poverty.¹ Struggle flared up time and again at the Takashima mines, where workers had to labour between 18 and 20 hours under the ground, were denied off days, and subjected to indignities. In August 1878 the miners destroyed the management premises and set fire to the homes of foreign engineers. The police arrested more than 100 persons. However, there was more unrest in 1884. In 1886 a strike took place at a textile mill in Kofu, a centre of the Japanese silk and cotton industry. Although this mill (as the entire industry) employed almost exclusively women, juveniles, and children, subjecting them to bestial exploitation, the strike was successful.

Other forms of struggle acquired growing significance as the international proletariat became more organised: there were mass rallies, demonstrations, marches by unemployed. Rallies were held for various reasons: in the course of major strikes in solidarity with strikers, during election campaigns, and in connection with important domestic or international developments. These rallies were organised by socialist parties, trade unions, and strike committees; in some cases they were spontaneous. They were addressed by militants, by socialist and trade union leaders, and sometimes by representatives of workers' organisations of foreign countries. Specific and general demands were formulated and proclaimed at the rallies.

An analysis of the working-class movement of the closing quarter of the nineteenth century brings to light the fact that the relatively "peaceful" character of this period, the distinctive features of which were the accumulation of strength by the proletariat and the spread of Marxism in breadth, in no way signified a relaxation of the class struggle. On the contrary, these years witnessed an unprecedented diversity of forms of struggle by the working class. Class clashes, in most cases initiated by the proletariat, were to be observed everywhere and these were a most remarkable school, tempering and uniting the workers, and giving them invaluable experience of struggle, experience that was to play a crucial part in the coming battles against capitalist rule.

¹ D. I. Goldberg, *Essays on the History of the Labour and Socialist Movement in Japan (1868-1908)*, Moscow, 1976 (in Russian).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT

The final decades of the nineteenth century were a period of rapid growth of the trade-union movement. In most of the capitalist countries the once tiny islands of workers organised by trades merged to form large and influential national associations. This gave the working class an instrument whose proper use enabled them to make substantial economic, social, and political gains. Lenin wrote that "the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions".¹

The trade unions played a large part in furthering the organisation of the proletarian masses, thereby clearing the way for the successful development of other forms of organised actions. The last few decades of the nineteenth century witnessed significant changes in the trade-union movement, chiefly a shift towards centralisation. Branch federations of trade unions sprang up in many countries and the cohesion of the unions themselves proceeded within territorial bounds; these two factors appreciably reinforced the potential of the proletariat in its struggle against employers, who more and more often acted in a united front.

Three basic types of trade unions, which for a long time characterised the international trade-union movement, more or less crystallised in the 1880s-1890s. These were, first, organisations of the trade-unionist type, which became most widespread in Britain, the USA, Canada, and Australia; second, trade unions relying on proletarian political parties adhering more or less to scientific socialism (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries); third, unions that came under the influence of anarcho-syndicalism—a trend that was particularly strong in Spain and France,

Associations of working people set up by entrepreneurs to counter the proletarian trade unions were a specific form of organisation.

The *trade unions*—the oldest organisations of the working class, denied that there was a basic conflict between the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and did not set themselves socialist aims. Their leaders held that their task was to improve the living and working conditions of the proletariat within the existing system. However, these were indeed mass organisations. In the economic, specifically strike, struggle they achieved some tangible results. "Without the means of resistance provided by the trade unions," Engels wrote, "the worker would not have obtained even what was due to him under the laws of the system of wage labour."²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 50.

² Friedrich Engels, "Das Lohnsystem", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, S. 253.

For a long time the trade unions championed the interests of only those workers who were their members. In the 1890s, when the number of trade unions grew markedly, they began to act more and more frequently as spokesmen of the interests of the proletariat in a given industry.

The British trade unions were the most typical of this kind of workers' organisation. By the close of the 1880s they had become closed corporations, which admitted chiefly highly-skilled workers into their ranks. Because they had relatively large funds at their disposal the trade unions in the engineering, cotton, metallurgical, printing, and some other industries could pay their members sickness, old age, and other allowances. But on account of their being isolated, lacking militancy, and their leaders propounding revisionist views, their influence was limited.

The big strikes of the close of the 1880s and the beginning of the 1890s gave the impetus for the formation of so-called new trade unions, which united hitherto unorganised semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Scores of these unions mushroomed: hundreds of thousands of workers, who had earlier been uncommitted, joined in the organised struggle. "In 1889," Lenin noted, "a young and fresh movement of untrained and unskilled labourers ... arose in Britain, a movement marked by a new and revolutionary spirit."¹

An important role was played in the "new trade unions" by a small but influential group of young craftsmen (one of whom was Tom Mann), who had turned to Marxism.

These "new trade unions" were militant organisations and they held that strikes were the main (in some cases, the only) means of struggle, spending their entire cash fund on allowances to strikers. They fought for two demands aimed at uniting the largest possible sections of workers: a guaranteed minimum wage (to make it independent of any fall in the prices of the commodities produced by the given firm or company) and an eight-hour working day.

This general upswing also affected the old trade unions, which found they had to open their doors to unskilled labourers and semi-skilled workers. In only two years, 1889-1890, the membership of the British trade unions more than doubled. At the turn of the century their membership stood roughly at 1,950,000 compared to 456,000 in 1876.

Simultaneously, there was a growing tendency towards organised unity on a national scale. The Miners' Federation of Great Britain was founded in 1889. This was, essentially speaking, the first large

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of Letters by Johannes Becker, Joseph Dietzgen, Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, and Others to Friedrich Sorge and Others", *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 375.

national trade union. Federations were later formed in other industries. A large role in uniting workers of various trades was played by the Trades Councils, whose numerical growth was particularly visible from the close of the 1880s onward. Eleven were formed in 1889, 19 in 1890, and 21 in 1891.¹

The rising tide of militant feeling in the trade unions influenced the stand of the British Trades Union Congress. In 1890, over the heads of the leaders of the old trade unions, the TUC passed a resolution demanding legislation establishing an eight-hour working day. In 1893 it was decided to set up an election fund to finance candidate MPs who recognised the principle of collective property in the means of production. A resolution demanding the nationalisation of land, mines, and all means of production was passed in 1894.

In the latter half of the 1890s the British trade-union movement was hurt seriously by the economic crisis and an onslaught by employers, who locked out workers at many factories. The hardest hit were unions of unskilled workers, who formed the foundation of the "new trade-unionism". The reformist leaders of the old unions used this situation to regain their hold on the TUC and neutralise the impact on it of socialist ideas. Politically, the TUC followed in the wake of the Liberal Party up to the end of the nineteenth century.

In Canada and Australia the trade-union movement developed largely under the influence of British trade-unionist traditions. The trade unions in Australia had their first congress in 1871, but the links between individual trade unions remained weak. The trade unions themselves were set up on the workshop principle, and this accounted for the glaring fragmentation. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there were 621 unions. Of these only 14 had a membership of over 1,000.² Fragmentation was observed in the Canadian trade-union movement as well. The total membership of the Canadian unions stood at only about 80,000 at the turn of the century.

In the USA the development of the trade-union movement ran into obstacles during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The growing attempts of the workers to organise themselves were strongly resisted by the authorities and the industrialists. Membership of a union was stigmatised as incompatible with the American way of life and sometimes punished by dismissal and blacklisting.

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789-1925*, Vol. II, 1848-1900, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. & The Labour Publishing Co. Ltd., London, 1926, p. 163.

² A. Y. Serebryany, "The Labour Movement in Britain's Australian Colonies in the Latter Half of the 19th Century", *Voprosy vseobshchei istorii*, Volgograd, 1972, pp. 49-64.

However, objective conditions made it imperative for the workers to unite against associations of industrialists and the state apparatus of violence. In 1881 the Order of the Knights of Labor renounced its status of a secret society and gained considerable influence quickly when, unlike the old unions, it admitted unskilled and semi-skilled workers to membership. Alongside unions and assemblies (local branches of the Order), based on the principle of affiliation to trades, it incorporated assemblies whose membership consisted of workers of various trades, handicraftsmen, and so on. In the mid-1880s the Order had nearly 730,000 members. However, the effects of the opportunist policies of its leadership began to be felt at the close of that same decade. Terence V. Powderly, who headed the Order, rejected the class struggle, seeing education, producers' cooperatives, a money and a land reform, a uniform tax, and government control of the railways and banks as the most effective ways of delivering working people from wage slavery. Despite the demand of its rank and file that the Order actively join the movement for an eight-hour working day, Powderly sent the locals a secret circular forbidding them to participate in that movement. This opportunist line was the main reason for the subsequent decline of the Order's popularity. Another factor was the growing competition from the trade unions of skilled workers. Moreover, this decline was also caused by government repressions aimed at weakening this largest organisation of the American working people. For all practical purposes, the Order of the Knights of Labor ceased to exist in the first half of the 1890s.

In the latter half of the 1880s the American Federation of Labor became the main trade-union centre in the USA. It appeared on the basis of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States of America and Canada, founded in 1881. The AF of L convention in 1886 was attended by delegates from 25 unions representing over 300,000 workers. The stand of the AF of L in those years is seen from the fact that having pointed out that the workers and capitalists were locked in a steadily mounting struggle,¹ the convention declared itself in support of the independent political labour movement and of the struggle for an eight-hour working day.

The AF of L organised a series of big strikes and headed the movement for an eight-hour working day. A convention in December 1888 approved a programme for a new campaign to mobilise the working class. In particular, it was decided to stage a general strike on May 1, 1890 so as to carry on the fight for an eight-hour working day to the victorious end.

¹ L. I. Zubok, *Essays on the History of the Labour Movement in the USA, 1865-1918*, p. 169.

However, a conservative trend soon began to get the upper hand in the AF of L. At the convention in December 1889 the AF of L leader Samuel Gompers and his supporters secured the rescinding of a decision on a general strike. Subsequently, the AF of L adopted an increasingly more conformist attitude, gradually degenerating into a typical trade-unionist organisation promoting class collaboration. The AF of L was basically structured on the shop principle: workers were united not by branches of industry and, correspondingly by enterprises, but by trades and by place of residence. Skilled workers were given membership priority: admission to trade unions was made difficult for unskilled workers, most of whom were immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and Blacks. Independent unions appeared in the 1890s. The largest of these were railway brotherhoods.

Meanwhile, the militant, class mood of the workers and their striving to oppose capitalism in the most diverse areas frequently made themselves felt in the AF of L itself. At its conventions in 1898 and 1899, for example, the American Federation of Labor adopted anti-imperialist resolutions emphasising that the oppressors of the colonial people were also the oppressors of the working class of the United States and that imperialism would only lead to further repression of the American labour movement.¹

In 1901 the US trade unions had a membership of over 1,000,000, of whom some 780,000 were affiliated to the AF of L.² Despite this growth, not more than 10 per cent of the industrial and transport workers were unionised.

The *second type of trade-union movement* gained the greatest prominence in Germany. The question of forming trades associations was raised at a meeting of delegates of a number of local unions in Nuremberg in 1868 and in Leipzig in 1869. Their Rules were drawn up by August Bebel, who based them on Marx's ideas about trade unions being a school of the class struggle. Trade associations of textile workers, factory workers and artisans, miners and blast-furnace workers, metalworkers, bootmakers, builders, wood-workers, tailors, bookbinders, fur-dressers, and other workers were set up on this basis.³ From the moment they were formed, the branch unions became active in the economic struggle of the working class. The first congress of social-democratic unions was held in Erfurt in 1872. The delegates represented 11,358 workers.⁴ Two years later a congress

¹ Philip S. Foner, *American Labor and the Indochina War. The Growth of Union Opposition*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 8.

² L. I. Zubok, *Essays on the History of the USA (1877-1918)*, Moscow, 1956, p. 328 (in Russian).

³ Dieter Fricke, *Die Deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, 1869-1890. Ihre Organisation und Tätigkeit*, VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, Leipzig, 1964, S. 290-92.

⁴ *Ibid.*, S. 293.

adopted the Rules of the German Trade Union Association and elected a Central Committee headed by Theodor Jork, a prominent Social-Democrat.

Although the leaders of the Lassallean General Workers' Union in principle denied the need for an economic struggle, at the close of the 1860s they decided to form their own trade unions in order to counter the unions influenced by the Eisenach movement. Initially, the Lassallean unions even had a larger membership, but they subsequently lost much of this membership, disenchanting the workers by their general policies and largely negative attitude to trade-union activities. In 1872 they proposed the disbandment of trade union organisations affiliated to the General Workers' Union, but this encountered strong resistance from the workers themselves.

A decisive step towards trade-union unity was made in 1875 following the mending of the rift in the socialist movement at the Gotha congress. In that same town a conference of representatives of Social-Democratic and Lassallean trade unions decided to merge local organisations of the two trends, set up a centralised leadership, and begin preparations for a national congress of associated trade unions.¹

The local Lassallean and social-democratic unions of molders, foundrymen, engineers, stonemasons, carpenters, tailors, woodworkers, and other trades were finally associated in 1875-1876. National centralised organisations were formed by bootmakers and blacksmiths. As many as 27 centralised Social-Democratic unions (usually known as free trade unions) were functioning by 1878. Their locals had an aggregate membership of about 50,000. Although the free trade unions represented only a small proportion of the working class—not above 2.5 per cent²—they played an important role in the development of the German working-class movement. They encouraged workers to participate in public life and show initiative, fostered their organisation and class consciousness, and were a link between the Socialist Labour Party and the proletarian masses.

"A great advantage to the German movement," Engels wrote, "is that the Trades' organization works hand in hand with the political organization. The immediate advantages offered by the Trades' organization draw many an otherwise indifferent man into the political movement while the community of political action holds together and assures mutual support to the otherwise isolated Trades Unions."³

¹ Alfred Förster, *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1871 bis 1890*, Verlag Tribüne, Berlin, 1962, S. 54.

² *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 1, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, S. 344.

³ *The Labor Standard*, 3.III.1878.

The trade unions, especially after the Bismarck government's introduction of an Anti-Socialist Law in 1878, had to contend with day-to-day police harassment. This persecution was spearheaded against the Social-Democratic Party, but the law was a serious blow to the trade unions as well: 17 central and innumerable local unions were disbanded, and almost all union newspapers were banned. Employers laid off trade-union militants, while the authorities kept them under police surveillance or deported them.

But as early as the first half of the 1880s, chiefly as a result of the correct tactics of the Social-Democratic Party, that successfully combined secret activities with legal means of struggle, a large proportion of the free trade unions were restored in one way or another under the guise of sickness benefit funds, mutual-aid societies, insurance agencies, and so forth. In 1885 these organisations had nearly 80,000 members, i.e., more than the trade unions had before they were dissolved by the authorities.¹ This was also when the restoration of central unions began. Try as they would, the ruling circles were no longer able to throttle the trade-union movement, in the face of enormous difficulties it acquired tempering and strength.

Interaction with the trade unions helped the Social-Democrats to rebuff Lassallean, right-opportunist, and anarchist trends, which had resurged when the party went underground. At the time the law against the Socialists was repealed (1890) there were in Germany 58 central trade unions with 300,000 members. Although they still embraced only part of the working class, they were a powerful force with considerable potentialities to carry on the struggle for the rights and interests of the proletariat.

Legalisation allowed the trade unions to expand their links with the masses, improve their work organisationally, and act more energetically as the spokesmen not only of the economic but also the political interests of the working class. The idea was advanced of forming a national association of free trade unions. Implementation of this idea began with a trade-union conference in Berlin in November 1890. The General Commission of Trade Unions set up at that conference headed the struggle for the right of workers to unite. More, it prepared the first national congress of trade unions, which took place in Halberstadt in March 1892. This congress proclaimed the formation of a permanent national association of social-democratic (free) trade unions.² The General Commission of Trade Unions,

¹ Franz Mehring, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. 2, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1960, S. 622.

² Wolfgang Schröder, *Klassenkämpfe und Gewerkschaftseinheit. Die Herausbildung und Konstituierung der gesamt nationalen deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung und der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands*, Tribüne Verlag, Berlin, 1965, S. 283-352.

chairmanned by the Social-Democrat Carl Legien, became the centre around which the trade unions united. The numerical strength of the free trade unions rose from 329,230 members in 1896 to 680,427 in 1900.¹

The formation of a national trade-union centre, with many large unions affiliated to it, was an important landmark in the development of the German working-class movement and reinforced the trend towards restructuring the trade unions on the principle of professions. However, some trade-union leaders in the new association very soon displayed a tendency to follow trade-unionist models of organisation, ideology, and political orientation. In subsequent years this slowed down the restructuring of the unions along the professional principle and, more significantly, prevented the establishment of proper relations between the trade unions and the political party of the working class.

A dispute over this subject, that was to last for many years, commenced at the Cologne congress of the Social-Democratic Party in 1893. Legien demanded the party's virtual subordination to the General Commission of Trade Unions.² Although the congress rejected the claims of Legien and his supporters, it failed to work out really revolutionary principles for the relationship between the party and the trade unions. The latter's tasks in preparing the masses for the proletarian revolution and the role of the party in working-class organisations were not recorded lucidly enough in the documents of the congress.

Moreover, in Germany there were, from 1868 onwards, what were known as Hirsch-Duncker trade unions,³ which had since their foundation propounded the view that there was "harmony" between the interests of labour and capital; by the close of the nineteenth century they had some 90,000 members, chiefly clerical workers. Some importance was acquired by Christian trade unions, that sprang up in the 1890s and were influenced by the bourgeois Centre Party, and also by Catholic unions. Railway workers and civil servants formed "independent" unions; these were denied the right to strike, and those that took part in strikes were taken to court on charges of "undermining the state system".

In Austria-Hungary the first trade unions sprang up in the closing years of the 1860s and the early 1870s, but from the beginning all attempts to form a broader association were fiercely resisted by the

¹ Dieter Fricke, *Zur Organisation und Tätigkeit der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (1890-1914)*, *Dokumente und Materialien*, VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, Leipzig, 1962, S. 212.

² *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. I, S. 437.

³ Named after their founders Max Hirsch and Franz Gustav Duncker, leaders of the German Progressive Party.

authorities. In 1873 there were somewhat above 100 unions with approximately 33,000 members. It is hard to establish their exact number because no final differentiation took place between the trade unions, on the one hand, and educational societies, sickness funds, and similar organisations, on the other. The further growth of the trade-union movement was halted on account of a prolonged crisis lasting to almost the end of the 1880s in the Austrian working-class movement. A turning point came with the reconstitution of a united party at a congress in Heinfeld in 1888. In 1891 there were in Austria nearly 300 unions with about 60,000 members.¹ However, even at this time these at best managed to unite on the scale of individual provinces.

A sustained struggle commenced against the authorities for the right to centralise. In 1890-1891 there was a series of national congresses of worker delegates by trades; this was a substantial advance towards the formation of branch unions. In the course of the preparations for this, many unions of workers of allied trades united, thereby spelling a departure from the shop principle. Metalworkers were the first to win the right to form a branch union on a national scale (1892). The next, and more important, aim was to unite different unions in a national union centre; this took place at the first congress of trade unions in December 1893. This congress declared for close contact with the Social-Democratic Party; its resolution stated that the trade-union organisation "shall, to achieve success, wage a struggle in all directions without forgetting political means and sharing the viewpoint and principles of social-democracy with regard to them".²

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Austrian trade unions had 120,000 members. At that time there were 126 unions with 23,000 members in Hungary. The Trade Union Council was constituted in 1898, and in May 1899 the trade unions held their first congress.³

In Belgium the trade-union movement began to grow after the articles of the criminal code qualifying the formation of any workers' coalitions as a felony were repealed in 1866. The Labour Chamber, a federation of workers' associations, was founded in Brussels in 1875. By 1891 the trade unions had between 60,000 and 70,000 members—somewhat more than one-tenth of the male workers in the nation. A national union centre, the Trade Union Commission of Belgium,

¹ Julius Deutsch, *op. cit.*, S. 220.

² Franz Hemala, *Geschichte der Gewerkschaften*, Verlag und Druck der Typographischen Anstalt, Wien, 1922, S. 93.

³ *A History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p. 46 (in Russian).

was set up in 1898, and was one of the chief exponents of reformism in the Belgian working-class movement.

The emergence of a trade-union movement in the Scandinavian countries was linked with the work of the International Workers' Union of Denmark, which was in fact the Danish section of the First International. Its achievements were highly appraised by Engels.¹ Through the efforts of the Union the Danish government introduced factory legislation in 1873.

By uniting not only Danes but also the Swedes and Norwegians residing in Denmark, the International Workers' Union helped to organise the workers in Sweden and Norway. Printing workers formed a union in Christiania (Oslo) in 1872 and in Bergen in 1876.

However, in Scandinavia most of the trade unions sprang up in the 1880s. In Denmark 189 unions were formed in the period from 1879 to 1889.² In Sweden between 250 and 275 unions were functioning by the beginning of the 1890s. In Norway cabinetmakers, mechanics, stonemasons, tailors, and bootmakers formed trade unions in 1880, and by 1889 these had between 3,000-4,000 members.³ In Sweden the first national branch unions were founded in 1886-1889, and another 26 were formed in the 1890s.

National associations of trade unions were set up in Denmark and Sweden in 1898, and in Norway in 1899. One of the main problems on the agenda of the constituent congresses of the Scandinavian trade-union centres was the character of their relations with Social-Democratic parties. For example, at the congress of the Central Association of Swedish Trade Unions the proposal on mandatory affiliation to the Social-Democratic Party was emphatically opposed by those who believed that the trade unions should be independent. Although this motion was passed, repeated efforts were subsequently made to have it reconsidered.

Close links were established between the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish trade unions from the very beginning. Scandinavian trade-union congresses were held regularly. The first of these took place in 1886 in Göteborg.

In 1899 Danish industrialists struck a heavy blow at the trade unions. By threatening massive lockouts, they forced the leadership of the Association of Trade Unions to sign the so-called September Agreement, which substantially curtailed the right to strike. Trade unions were obliged to warn factory owners twice—14 days and then

¹ Engels an Louis Albert François Pio, Mitte März, 1872 Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 428-429.

² Ib Nørlund, *Det knager i samfundets fuger og bånd*, Danmarks kommunistiske Parti, Skolingsudvalget, Copenhagen, 1960, p. 28.

³ Jörgen Westerstahl, *Svensk fackföreningsrörelse. Organisationsproblem Verksamhetsformer Förhållande till staten*, Tidens Förlag, Stockholm, 1945, p. 23.

seven days in advance of a strike. Needless to say, this gave the owners time to make their preparations. Paragraph 4 of the agreement gave owners the right "freely to direct and distribute work, and also hire the labour they consider suitable". In later years this agreement was a serious obstacle to the work of the trade unions and led to the assertion of reformism in the Danish working-class movement.

The *trade-union movement in the Latin countries* acquired specific forms. There a large (and sometimes predominant) role was played by the anarcho-syndicalists, who proclaimed the overthrow of capitalism and the socialisation of the means of production as their objective, but overrated the significance and potentialities of trade-union associations, whom they regarded as the principal form of organising the working class and the main force of a socialist revolution. They held that the general economic strike was the key to destroying the exploiting system, and gave it preference over all other forms and methods of struggle.

Being opposed to the state, the anarcho-syndicalists rejected all forms of political struggle. They saw the future society as a federation of syndicates (associations) managing production and exchange. The trade unions accepting this principle were in most cases structured on a federalist foundation with the local organisations enjoying broad autonomy.

In France, after the existence of trade unions was finally sanctioned in 1884, the political organisations of the proletariat took the initiative in forming them.¹ In 1886, thanks to the efforts of the French Workers' Party (*Le Parti Ouvrier*—Guesdists), the National Federation of Chambres Syndicales, which united workers in each separate industry, was founded at a congress in Lyons. This congress declared that the Federation "proclaims itself the sister of all existing socialist workers' federations".²

The French Workers' Party made every effort to draw the trade unions into militant participation in the class struggle, explaining that actions with solely economic demands as their aims would not lead to the emancipation of the proletariat. However, despite this correct premise, the party underrated the struggle for day-to-day economic requirements, hindering the work of the trade unions by its constant stewardship. Nevertheless, the National Federation of Chambres Syndicales played a large organising role. In particular, it was the initiator of the struggle for an eight-hour working day and for the celebration of May Day in France.

¹ The same law permitted the formation of associations of employers and peasants, but prohibited organisations of civil servants and public services employees.

² Jean Bruhat, Marc Piolot, *Esquisse d'une histoire de la C. G. T. Confédération Générale du Travail*, Paris, 1958, p. 40.

Another form of trade association, chiefly on the local level, began to take shape from 1887 onwards. This was the labour exchange (*bourse*), which organised mutual aid among workers, helped them to find jobs, and so on. A reformist-influenced Federation of Labour Exchanges was set up in 1892. By the mid-1890s the labour exchanges embraced nearly 250,000 workers, or 65 per cent of the French unionised work force.¹ By that time the anarcho-syndicalists had strengthened their position. Their influence in the main trade-union centres grew in proportion to the workers' disenchantment with the policies of the opportunist leadership, their dissatisfaction with the rivalry between the different socialist groups, and their resultant greater striving for unity in the trade-union movement. A major indication of this was the approval by congresses of the National Federation of *Chambres Syndicales* and of the Federation of Labour Exchanges in 1894 and then by their joint congress in Nantes that same year of the declaration that the general economic strike could "supplant" the political revolution.²

The Guesdists denounced this misconceived declaration but failed to see the strong, widespread urge for unity in the French trade-union movement. They made the serious mistake of walking out of the Nantes congress.

The General Confederation of Labour of France was formed in Limoges in 1895. This was the first time that workers' organisations joined forces nationally. However, the sectarian stand of the Guesdists in the GCL tilted the balance in favour of the anarcho-syndicalist trend, which ran a dividing line between the trade-unions and the political organisations of the working class. Rejection of politics by the anarcho-syndicalists ultimately opened the door to the reformists, who confined the aims of the movement to improving social legislation and collective bargaining.

In Italy trade unions began to appear first as mutual-aid societies. The first attempt to unite the various unions was made in 1882. The Italian Labour Party, which saw its task in organising workers according to trades and championing their rights, was constituted in Milan. This organisation was like a trade-union association and mirrored the phase of the movement when there was still no differentiation between parties and unions as such. It functioned mainly in industrial centres in Lombardy.

National trade-union associations—federations of printers (1872), metalworkers (1891), joiners (1901), and others—appeared in the 1870s-1890s. In the 1890s, when a sharp class struggle unfolded in

¹ Fernand Pelloutier, *Histoire des Bourses du Travail. Origine-Institutions-Avenir*, Schleicher Frères, Editeurs, Paris, 1902, pp. 76, 79.

² T. Militsina, *Struggle of Trends in the Trade-Union Movement in France*, Moscow, 1937, p. 66 (in Russian).

Italy, the trade unions had roughly 150,000 members.¹ However, the principal driving force of the Italian trade-union movement were not the branch federations (there were still few of them) but rather the local inter-union associations, called sindacatos. The first of these sindacatos were formed in 1891 in Milan, Turin, and Piacenza as agencies trying to improve the condition of workers and other working people by finding jobs, helping to set up cooperatives, providing education, and so forth. An Italian Federation of Chambers of Labour (La Federazione Italiana delle Camere del lavoro) was set up in Parma at a congress in 1893. The repressions of the Italian reaction against the masses turned these sindacatos into centres of resistance. The events of 1898 in Milan, where the working people took to barricades, are a case in point.

By the mid-1890s the Italian trade unions gradually separated themselves organisationally from the political party of the proletariat. Due to the extremely difficult conditions of those years—for a number of years the Socialist Party functioned underground—practically no links could be established between the trade unions and proletarian political organisations. This was hindered by, among other things, an upsurge of reformist tendencies in the leadership of the Socialist Party. In turn, the “revolutionary impatience” engendered by the unceasing attacks of reaction on the rights of working people and the large influx (for Italy) of petty-bourgeois elements into the ranks of the working class gave anarcho-syndicalism increasing influence in the Italian trade-union movement in the early years of the twentieth century.

A workers’ congress in Barcelona, Spain, in 1881 set up a Regional Working People’s Federation that adhered to an anarchist platform from the outset. It rejected cooperation with political parties and refused to see political struggle as a means of achieving the aims of the working class. In 1882 this organisation had nearly 70,000 members; in 1888 it was banned, and its place was taken by a new anarchist trade-union centre with an even more radical leadership.²

Trade unions linked to the Socialist Party appeared at the end of the 1880s. The General Labour Union was formed at a congress in Barcelona in 1888, but it had no serious influence and as late as 1899 had not more than 15,000 members.

A distinctive feature of the trade-union movement during the last 25 years of the nineteenth century was that it broadened out consi-

¹ *La storia del sindacato in Italia*, Edizioni 'Conquiste del lavoro, Rome, 1966, p. 27.

² I. M. Maisky, *Spain, 1808-1917. An Outline History*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 354-56 (in Russian).

derably. Unions sprang up in Japan, in some Latin American states, and in New Zealand.

In Japan the formation and activities of trade unions encountered particularly great difficulties on account of the total absence of democratic freedoms and the wide employment of female and child labour. The first workers' mutual-aid societies appeared at the close of the 1880s and in the early 1890s. These united small numbers of workers, chiefly metalworkers and roofers, on a local scale. The development of trade unions proceeded faster in the latter half of the 1890s, largely as a result of the efforts of Sen Katayama and the organisations founded by him. The Metalworkers' Union, considered the first modern trade union in Japanese history, was constituted in 1897. Towards the end of the following year it had 32 branches in such large industrial centres as Yokohama, Yokosuka, Osaka, Uraga, Omiya, and also on Hokkaido, and a membership of 2,717.¹ The Locomotive Engineers and Stokers Union was founded in 1898, and the Printers' Union in 1899. At first, the leaders of the latter union preached "harmony" between labour and capital, but socialist ideas subsequently took ever firmer root in this union, which had about 2,000 members.

In the 1890s most of the European countries and the USA had *national associations of unions*. The workers had by then won legislation giving trade unions various rights, but an unremitting struggle had to be waged with entrepreneurs and the authorities for the observance of these rights.

Beginning in the latter half of the 1880s there were several attempts to strengthen *international links between trade unions*. In November 1888 an international conference attended by trade-unionists from France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Belgium was held in London on the initiative of British trade unions. The reformist leaders of the latter unions counted on the conference consolidating their premier role in the international trade-union movement. But most of the foreign delegates took a stand on some issues that differed substantially from that of their British counterparts. In particular, a resolution was passed calling for legislation regulating the length of the working day and the conditions of work, which was at variance with the line pursued by the British trade-union leaders. In spite of the latter, the conference put it on record that workers should be organised in an independent political party. In subsequent years there were international conferences of printers', miners', and other branch unions.

In order to halt the inexorable growth of independent proletarian class organisations and the rising influence of socialism in these

¹ Sen Katayama, *Recollections*, Moscow, 1964, p. 265 (Russian translation).

organisations the bourgeoisie tried to counterpose organisations already influenced by it to the trade associations of the proletariat. Such organisations were the Mazzini workers' societies in Italy and the Hirsch-Duncker unions in Germany. Similar attempts were made in other countries. But this had little effect.

From the standpoint of the ruling classes, the efforts made in this direction by the Christian Church were much more productive.¹ In the 1890s the Church made a large effort to set up a Christian equivalent of a class trade-union movement.

Here Germany led the field. The first *Catholic trade unions* were formed in 1894 in the mining industry. Later they sprang up in other industries; evangelic trade unions likewise appeared. The Church was interested in uniting these organisations on an inter-confessional foundation, and the first congress of German Christian trade unions was held in 1899. At the close of the nineteenth century these unions had 56,000 members.

In France the first Catholic trade unions were founded at the end of the 1890s. Taking into account the Church's immense influence over women, the French Catholics set up women's unions, which enrolled women wage- and salary-workers of various professions. However, there were only a few Catholic trade unions in France and therefore they could not play a serious role in the trade-union movement. At the turn of the century they had not more than 2,500 members.²

In the closing years of the 1880s trade unions of this type appeared in Flanders, where the influence of the Catholic Church was particularly great, and in the 1890s in Italy, Switzerland, and Austria (by the year 1900 they had some 8,000 members).³ These unions recruited members mainly among clerical workers, small artisans and shopkeepers, and proletarians employed in primitive, semi-artisan industries.

RISE AND GROWTH OF PROLETARIAN SOCIALIST PARTIES

The massive actions of the working class during the last 25 years of the nineteenth century were made possible chiefly by the significant growth of the socialist movement. It was in this period that proletarian parties, most of which were guided by the theory of scientific socialism, sprang up in most of the capitalist countries.

¹ The Church's influence on the working-class movement is considered in Chapter 8.

² Robert Talmy, *Le syndicalisme chrétien en France (1871-1930), Difficultés et controverses*, Paris, 1966, p. 50.

³ *Cents cinquante ans de mouvement ouvrier chrétien*, Louvain-Paris, 1966, pp. 399, 472; Julius Deutsch, op. cit., S. 388.

At the Gotha congress in 1875 the *Social-Democratic Labour Party of Germany* merged with the *National German Workers' Union*, thereby ending the split in the German working-class movement, which had played a huge part in the ongoing development of the working-class struggle for emancipation. Although the programme of the Socialist Labour Party of Germany (the name assumed by it after the merger), adopted at the congress, contained basic concessions to Lassalleanism, and was, on the theoretical plane, a step back from the Eisenach programme (adopted six years earlier), for which Marx and Engels strongly criticised the draft of the new programme,¹ the successful revolutionary practice of the German Social-Democratic movement largely neutralised its serious shortcomings. At the Reichstag elections in January 1877 the Social-Democrats polled nearly half a million votes, winning 13 seats. At the close of the same year the party and the trade unions associated with it were publishing more than 60 periodicals. This was essentially the only socialist party in Europe at the time, and the Socialists of other countries tried to measure up to it. "The proletariat of Germany," Engels wrote at the time, "is in no wise inferior to the task of temporary leadership imposed upon it. Whatever mistakes some of the leaders may have made—and they are both numerous and manifold—the masses themselves have marched *onwards* resolutely, unhesitatingly and in the right direction."²

This assessment was borne out after the Bismarck government tried to check the growing strength of the German Social-Democratic movement with the promulgation of the Anti-Socialist Law in October 1878. This law in fact drove the party underground: its organisations were banned, almost all its newspapers and other publications were closed, and it was denied permission to hold meetings and rallies. The most militant members of the movement were expelled from large cities, and some were imprisoned, many found themselves without the means of subsistence and had to emigrate.

This law was conceived as a long-term measure. Bismarck, its principal architect, hoped that together with some curtailed social measures the outlawing of the Social-Democratic Party would be a death blow to the revolutionary working-class movement.

The Anti-Socialist Law was a serious test for the young party of German revolutionaries. The international working-class movement had no experience of combining illegal and legal means of struggle. For some time there was wavering and confusion in the German Social-Democratic Party. Right-opportunist elements became more

¹ This criticism is shown in some detail and the programme itself is discussed under the next heading of this chapter.

² *The Labor Standard*, 3.III.1878.

articulate. Their programme was stated unambiguously in the notorious article "A Retrospective Survey of the Socialist Movement in Germany. Critical Aphorisms" printed in 1879 in a journal published in Zurich on funds provided by the reformist Karl Höchberg, who was associated with the Social-Democratic Party. This article, penned by Höchberg, Eduard Bernstein, and Carl August Schramm, spelled out an undisguised reformist programme calling for a total abandonment of revolutionary aims and methods of struggle and for the conversion of the working-class party into an instrument of the liberal bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels characterised the views of the article's authors with the words: "The Social-Democratic Party is *not* to be a workers' party, is not to incur the odium of the bourgeoisie or anyone else; it should above all conduct energetic propaganda among the bourgeoisie; instead of laying stress on far-reaching aims which frighten away the bourgeoisie and after all are not attainable in our generation, it should rather devote its whole strength and energy to those petty-bourgeois patchwork reforms which, by providing the old order of society with new props, may perhaps transform the ultimate catastrophe into a gradual, piecemeal and as far as possible peaceful process of dissolution."¹

Further, elements headed by Johann Most, who emigrated to Britain and began the publication of the newspaper *Freiheit*, became active (anarchist-prone from the outset, these elements went over to the anarchist camp). In *Freiheit*, to quote Marx, there was "*no revolutionary content whatever, only revolutionary phrase-mongering*".² The anarchists demanded armed action against the existing regime, in other words, a tactic that would inevitably bring about isolation from the masses and the destruction of the party.

With direct assistance from Marx and Engels, who, in the above-mentioned Circular Letter to Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracke, and Others, sharply criticised the opportunists and urged resolute action against them, the party, with backing from Social-Democratic workers, cut short the right and left deviations and began to operate effectively in a new, extremely complex and difficult situation. This was in fact the international working-class movement's first experience of combining underground work with all the legal means at the party's disposal, chiefly participation in elections and in parliament. This experience was of enormous importance not only for Germany but also for the liberation movement of the working class of other coun-

¹ Marx and Engels to A. Bebel, W. Liebknecht, W. Bracke and Others (Circular Letter), Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 92.

² Marx an Friedrich Adolph Sorge, 19. September, 1879, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 34, S. 411.

tries, especially where the Socialists functioned underground and semi-underground. Lenin subsequently drew upon the German experience to organise the work of the Russian revolutionary Social-Democratic Labour Party.

In the period the Anti-Socialist Law was operative, the party's tactic was to preserve the revolution-oriented illegal organisation while preventing it from degenerating into a conspiratorial society. That such a society would have been a disaster was shown by the movement's experience. The party's local branches were restored gradually, in one form or another. Party meetings were held under the guise of choral societies, smokers' clubs, and so on, and also, during election campaigns, of election meetings. In the way of organising underground activities much was done by the Social-Democratic deputies in the Reichstag, who furthered the party's cause during their tours of the country. The smoothly-functioning system of secret delivery to Germany of many thousands of copies of the party's central newspaper *Sozialdemokrat*,¹ printed first in Zurich and then in London, and also of leaflets which were circulated among workers—the system was known as the Red postal service and served as the link between party organisations—sustained confidence among party members and sympathisers.² A significant factor was that there were innumerable worker-correspondents whose contributions were printed anonymously and comprised an important element of the newspaper's contents. Later secret printshops were set up to print the newspaper from matrices smuggled in from abroad. Julius Motteler, who organised this Red postal service, formed a network of secret agents to keep out provocateurs and spies. This network was instrumental in ferreting out hundreds of police spies.³

The Iron Chancellor's plans thus encountered organised and steadily mounting resistance from advanced elements of Germany's working class. By skilfully using the means at their disposal, the German Social-Democrats not only prevented the destruction of

¹ The role of this paper is described in H. Bartel, *Marx und Engels im Kampf um ein revolutionäres deutsches Parteiorgan, 1879-1890*, Berlin, 1961; H. Bartel, W. Schröder, G. Seeber, H. Wolter, *Der Sozialdemokrat, 1879-1890*, Berlin, 1975.

² On August 8, 1880, the newspaper wrote: "Not a day passes without it being reported from many towns and localities that invisible hands are circulating the *Sozialdemokrat*. 'Death to Parasites', 'Triumph of Social-Democracy', 'To the German People', and other publications are distributed in hundreds and thousands of copies from door to door, at factories, in the streets and squares, in omnibuses, and even in churches (!)...What is most frightening for the police is that they are very rarely able to find the distributors."

³ A more detailed account is given in E. Engelberg, *Revolutionäre Politik und rote Feldpost, 1878-1890*, Berlin, 1959, S. 172-213.

the working-class movement but significantly strengthened and enlarged their ranks and extended their influence among the workers. At the Reichstag elections in 1881 the party polled somewhat above 300,000 votes, while in 1890 its candidates received 1,427,000 votes or 19 per cent of the total cast in the elections. In September 1890 the Anti-Socialist Law was repealed. The party emerged victorious from the battle forced upon it by the ruling classes.

In the 1890s the German Social-Democrats remained the strongest contingent of the international working-class movement. Led by the party, the German working class won major class battles, securing an improvement of living and working conditions. However, already then the party was strongly influenced by opportunist ideas, which at the end of the century led to the formation of a revisionist wing that demanded a reappraisal of the revolutionary theory and strategy of the class struggle.

Momentum was gained by a *socialist movement in France* during the last 25 years of the nineteenth century. It had considerable influence among the workers. Most of the delegates at the Third Workers' Congress in Marseilles in October 1879, which founded the Workers' Party, supported the so-called collectivist-Socialists headed by Jules Guesde. They called for the socialisation of the means of production and for working-class participation in the political struggle. This was evidence that the Proudhonist and other petty-bourgeois socialist schools had begun to lose their clout. In early 1880 Guesde and his supporters restarted the newspaper *L'Egalité*,¹ which Marx called the "first 'French' workers' paper in the true sense of this term".² In the same year the Workers' Party held a congress in Le Havre, at which it adopted a programme that was on the whole in keeping with the spirit of Marxism. However, the influence of the reformists was still strong, and this soon led to a split in the party.

At the Workers' Party congress in St. Etienne in September 1882 the majority of the delegates voted for a reformist programme advanced by the former Proudhonists Paul Brousse and Benoit Malon and proclaiming that the movement's main aim was to win a majority in the municipal councils in the belief that the enterprises set up by these councils would gradually replace capitalist property with public ownership. This "policy of possibilities" gave its name to the Possibilists, a school that for many years personified the reformist wing in the French socialist movement.

The delegates who remained faithful to the Marxist programme walked out of the St. Etienne congress and held their own congress in Rouen, which became an important landmark in the develop-

¹ It had been published in 1877-1878.

² Marx to Friedrich Adolph Sorge November 5, 1880, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 312.

ment of the French Workers' Party headed by Jules Guesde (hence its widely accepted name "Guesdist") and Paul Lafargue in a genuinely socialist direction. But at the time it was still "an agglomerate of small groups that had no strong links with the working class".¹ The party's principal task became to establish these links.

In the latter half of the 1880s, due to its vigorous actions in championing the interests of the proletariat, the Workers' Party won broader influence among the working people: it brought many *chambres syndicales* (trade unions) under its influence. Towards the beginning of the next decade the Workers' Party was the strongest among the French socialist organisations. Its resolute defence of proletarian interests involved it in the big class battles of those years and won it wide support in centres of the textile, mining, and metallurgical industries. But its strong contacts with the trade-union movement were eroded by sectarian mistakes and an insufficiently flexible policy, with the result that the leadership of this movement passed to the anarcho-syndicalists.

Lack of unity very adversely affected the development of the socialist movement. In addition to the Workers' Party and the Possibilists, who later called themselves the Federation of Socialist Workers, there was the Blanquist organisation—the Central Revolutionary Committee (in 1898 it took the name Revolutionary Socialist Party). An anarcho-syndicalist-inclined faction led by Jean Allename split away from the Possibilists in October 1890 and formed the Workers' Socialist Revolutionary Party. In 1893 a group in the bourgeois Radical Party announced that they were adopting socialist principles and would henceforth call themselves Independent Socialists. Eight socialist organisations functioned in France in the mid-1890s.

The Socialist Party of Belgium was founded in 1879 with a relatively small membership. It was only in April 1885, after it merged with some workers' organisations (trade unions and cooperatives) that the large *Belgian Labour Party* emerged. A feature distinguishing this party (and, to some extent, some other socialist parties when they were nascent) was that from the beginning it was a conglomerate of former workers' associations. This contributed to the growth of its membership but reduced its role as the political vanguard of the working class. Its leaders included César de Paepe, who was active in the First International, a marble-cutter L. Bertrand, and a militant of the cooperative movement E. Anseele. With the onset of the next decade this party started a vigorous campaign for universal suffrage.

In the Netherlands Social-Democratic groups sprang up at the

¹Claude Willard, *Les guesdistes*, Editions Sociales, Paris, 1965, p. 26.

close of the 1870s; in 1882 they united to form the Social-Democratic Union. During the first half of the 1890s the Union came under the domination of anarchist views, whose principal proponent was its founder, a former priest named Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis. Opponents of the anarchists resigned from the Union and in 1894 formed the *Netherlands Social-Democratic Labour Party*.¹

The first attempt to establish a socialist party in Switzerland was made as early as the latter half of the 1870s. However, it was not before 1888 that the *Swiss Social-Democratic Party* was formally constituted by a workers' congress.

In Denmark a socialist association called the *Social-Democratic Union* was formed in 1876. At the end of the next decade a split between opportunist and revolutionary elements, headed by Gerson Georg Trier and N. Peterson respectively, led to the founding of the Social-Democratic Party, which proclaimed its adoption of the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

The constituent congress of the *Social-Democratic Labour Party of Sweden* in 1889 closed the first period of the socialist movement's development in that country. From the outset, its leadership was in the hands of reformists (Karl Hjalmar Branting, and others); the revolutionary elements (August Palm and A. Danielson) were a minority. The *Norwegian Labour Party* had been constituted two years earlier, in 1887; in 1891 it adopted a programme based on the Erfurt programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

In *Austria* the confrontation between reformist and radical elements soon led to a split in the Social-Democratic Party. The attempts to mend it, made at several congresses in the latter half of the 1870s, came to nothing. The Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party, which regarded itself as a faction of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party, was formed in 1878 in the then most industrialised region of Austria—the Czech lands.² The situation was compounded when the radical wing in the latter began to lean towards anarchism. In the mid-1880s proponents of anarchist methods committed a number of acts of terrorism against the police with the result that repressions rained down on the working-class movement.

Nevertheless, the consolidation of Austria's socialist forces was not stopped. Some of the left-wing leaders, disenchanted by anarchist tactics, came round to realising that legal methods of struggle were indispensable. Militants of the movement increasingly saw the need

¹ G. G. Bauman, *The Working-Class and Socialist Movement in the Netherlands (1861-1918)*, Rostov-on-Don, 1975, pp. 9, 13-14 (in Russian).

² Arnost Klíma, *Počátky českého dělnického hnutí*, Praha, Obris, 1948, pp. 79-82; Zdeněk Solle, *Delické hnutí v českých zemích koncem minulého století (1887-1897)*, Praha, 1951.

for re-establishing a united party.¹ The preparations for this had been made mainly by two socialist newspapers that bore the same name—*Gleichheit*, published respectively in Vienna (in German) and in Brno (in Czech). The former was edited by Victor Adler, a doctor in Vienna, who had embraced Marxism; the latter's editor was Josef Hybes, who was later to become one of the founders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The congress prepared by them was held on December 30, 1888-January 1, 1889, in Heimfeld; it proclaimed the establishment of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Austria.

A massive struggle for universal suffrage unfolded in the first half of the 1890s, and in 1896 it scored its first success. Some big strikes, notably in Bohemia and Moravia, were staged during these years under the leadership of the Social-Democrats. In view of the enormous potentials generated by the intertwining of brutal class and national oppression, Engels attached considerable importance to the activities of the new Austrian Social-Democratic Party. "Austria," he wrote with satisfaction in 1893, "is now in the forefront of the European political movement."² Enthusiasm ran high on May Day, which was marked with slogans demanding political rights and the repeal of anti-labour laws (this was ultimately achieved). "From 1890 onward," Engels said, addressing the Austrian proletariat, "the Austrian workers have consistently shown their brothers in all other countries the meaning of true May Day celebrations in a genuine proletarian spirit. Nobody has been able to equal you or at least only repeat your example."³ Two years after the party was formed the number of its local branches doubled, its membership went up from 15,000 to nearly 50,000, and the circulation of its publications increased sixfold.

A major step towards the formation of a proletarian party was made in *Hungary* at the close of the 1870s. The creation of a "party of non-voters" was proclaimed at the first labour socialist congress in April 1878. It had to adopt that name and declare that its formal aim was to achieve universal suffrage because socialist organisations were banned. One of its founders and leaders was Léo Frankel, who had been active in the First International and taken part in the Paris Commune, and was a friend of Marx and Engels. The Labour Party, that was formed soon afterwards, came under Lassallean influence. In 1880 the two organisations merged to form the General

¹ H. Steiner, *Die Arbeiterbewegung Österreichs, 1867-1889*, Wien, 1964, Kap. V.

² Engels an Victor Adler, 10. November 1893, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, S. 164.

³ Den österreichischen Arbeitern zum 1. Mai 1893, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 402.

Workers' Party of Hungary.¹ In the mid-1890s it changed its name to Social-Democratic Party.

In Spain the *Socialist Labour Party* was founded in secrecy in 1879 on the basis of the Marxist New Spanish Federation of the International. One of its leading personalities was Pablo Iglesias, who had worked with Marx and Engels in the First International. The party was numerically small, and it won a foothold among the working class only in the latter half of the 1880s, when it was allowed to function legally. To some extent this was due to the newspaper *El Socialista*, whose publication was started in 1886. At its first congress in 1888 the delegates represented upwards of 3,500 members. Towards the end of the next decade it had 55 local branches and about 20 newspapers.² Its main support was in, apart from Madrid, the Land of the Basques, Asturias, and other industrial regions. However, most of the organised Spanish proletariat remained under anarchist leadership.

The *Portuguese Socialist Party* was founded in early 1875, and was formally proclaimed at its first congress two years later. In 1878 Engels, noting that "the working class of Portugal takes its proper share in the great and universal struggle for the emancipation of labor", wrote that "in Portugal the movement remained always free from the 'anarchist' taint, and proceeded upon the same rational basis as in most other countries".³

In Italy the socialist working-class movement continued to gather momentum in the second half of the 1870s, chiefly under the influence of the Bakuninists. But local socialist organisations, more or less free of the influence of Bakuninist dogmas, appeared as early as the beginning of the 1880s. In 1876-1877 a group of Socialists linked to the newspaper *La Plebe*, to which Engels contributed, formed the Upper Italian Federation, which proclaimed the need for an independent political party of the proletariat. The untenability of the Bakuninist programme began to be seen by some prominent anarchists. This was in large part due to an open letter by Andréa Costa, one of the most popular leaders of the Italian Bakuninists, published in *La Plebe* on August 3, 1879 and marking his renunciation of anarchism. "To be a *party of action*," he wrote, "does not mean striving for action at any cost and at any moment... Revolution is inevitable, but it seems to me that practice has shown that it is not a matter

¹ *A History of Hungary*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1972, pp. 309-11; B I Zhelitsky, op. cit., pp. 152-56 (both in Russian).

² I. M. Maisky, op. cit., p. 352.

³ *The Labor Standard*, 3.III.1878.

of one day or one year.”¹ He stressed that use had to be made of various means of struggle and that political reforms had to be one of the objectives. He called for the formation of a political party of the Italian proletariat.

The Revolutionary Socialist Party of Romagna, headed by Costa, was founded at a secret congress in Rimini in 1881. The Italian Labour Party, formed in 1882, was more reminiscent of a trade union. At a congress in Genoa in 1892 these two parties merged with the Milan Socialist League (formed in 1889, it was the closest to Marxism) to bring the Italian Workers' Party into being. Three years later it was renamed the *Italian Socialist Party*. Its programme contained some Marxist provisions, for instance, the need for political struggle and the winning of political power by the proletariat. This signified abandonment of anarchist dogmas and was very significant for the subsequent development of the Italian working-class movement. However, this programme had some substantial theoretical shortcomings. In addition, there were organisational weaknesses: at the time it was founded the party could not clearly draw a line of demarcation between itself and the trade unions; it admitted workers to membership not individually but exclusively through their associations.

After the passage of the Italian variant of the Anti-Socialist Law in 1894 (it remained in force intermittently until the turn of the twentieth century), the conditions became extremely difficult for the activities of proletarian organisations. The repressions started against the still raw Italian Socialist Party prevented it from becoming a militant vanguard of the working people. However, the repressions led to a hardening of reformist feeling in the party, and induced some of its leaders to seek to form a bloc with liberal bourgeoisie and limit the aims of the proletariat to the struggle for the attainment of bourgeois-democratic freedoms. This sentiment was denounced by consistent revolutionaries in the party, notably Antonio Labriola.

In Britain the *Social-Democratic Federation* (founded in August 1884 by a group of democratic intellectuals led by H. M. Hyndman) was the first British organisation to proclaim a programme based on the ideas of scientific socialism. It was active in spreading these ideas, and many leading personalities (who came from working-class families) of the British working-class movement began their careers in that organisation. They included the mechanic Tom Mann, who was later to be one of the founders of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and the cardboard factory worker Harry Quelch,

¹ Gastone Manacorda, *II movimento operaio italiano attraverso i suoi congressi. Dalle origini alla formazione del Partito Socialista (1853-1892)*, Edizioni Rinascita, Roma, 1953, pp. 336, 337.

who, Lenin wrote in 1913, was always "in the front ranks of those who fought steadfastly and with conviction against opportunism and a liberal-labour policy in the British working-class movement".¹ But due to its weak links with the masses and its refusal to work in the trade unions, the SDF failed to win recognition as the leader of the British proletariat. At the close of 1884 a group of Socialists (Marx's daughter Eleanor Marx-Aveling, her husband Edward Aveling, the poet and artist William Morris, the philosopher E. Belfort Bax, and the workers R. Banner and John L. Mahon), motivated by their dissatisfaction with Hyndman's sectarian policies, resigned from the Federation and organised the *Socialist League*. But anarchist sentiments soon prevailed in it and in the first half of the 1890s the League lost all its influence. Some of its leaders, who remained committed to Marxism, returned to the Social Democratic Federation.²

In Britain several workers' organisations merged in 1893 to form the *Independent Labour Party*, which expounded, albeit loosely, socialist aims. Its leader, James Keir Hardie, a former miner, was far from understanding the tenets of scientific socialism and grew more and more inclined towards reformism. Unlike the Social-Democratic Federation, the ILP was active in the trade unions.

In the USA, too, the socialist organisations were unable to find their way to the masses. Formed in 1876 the *Socialist Labor Party* united various socialist groups, chiefly former sections of the International. Initially its membership consisted mostly of German immigrant workers; for some time Lassallelean elements were predominant. In the early 1890s Daniel De Leon became the party's leader and tried to spread its influence among broader segments of American workers. These attempts were not successful and, by and large, the Socialist Labor Party was never able to transcend its implicit inclination towards sectarianism. Until the end of the nineteenth century it remained a numerically small group with no significant role to play in the nation's working-class movement.

A new workers' political organisation, the *Social-Democratic Party*, was formed in the USA in 1897. It was headed by Eugene V. Debs, a former locomotive fireman and national secretary and treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. At first it was joined by various socialist groups and even some members of the SLP. Its programme proclaimed socialist aims but rejected revolutionary methods of struggle, attaching paramount significance to parliamentary activity. This party was unable to win the support of the proletarian masses.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Harry Quelch", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 370.

² L. F. Tupoleva, *The Socialist Movement in England in the 1880s*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 76-83 (in Russian).

Lenin saw the proletariat's complete subordination to bourgeois politics and the sectarian isolation of handfuls of Socialists from the proletariat as the principal hallmarks of the working-class movement in Britain and the USA in those years.¹ In characterising the attitude of the founders of Marxism to this type of working-class movement, he wrote that "in such countries, Marx and Engels taught the socialists to rid themselves *at all cost* of narrow sectarianism, and to *join* with the working-class movement so as to *shake up* the proletariat *politically*"².

Despite the enormous difficulties stemming, above all, from the total absence of legal possibilities, the *first political workers' organisations* sprang up in *Russia* in the latter half of the 1870s. The South-Russian Workers' Union, formed in the second half of 1875 by E. Zaslavsky and numbering some 60 permanent members, was in existence for only a few months. However, it left an imprint in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement for it was the first to set the task of organising the proletariat for a struggle against the government, for political freedoms. Its programme was formulated in accordance with some provisions of the General Rules of the International Working Men's Association written by Marx. For example, its own rules declared that it was necessary to spread the "idea of liberating workers from capitalist oppression", that the workers "can win recognition of their rights only by means of a forcible upheaval that will destroy all advantages and privileges", that "this upheaval can take place only when all the workers become fully conscious of their desperate situation and unite". Other provisions—the idea of international solidarity among working people, recognition of the need for revolutionary agitation among the people, and the struggle for social emancipation were close to the programme provisions of the Russian section of the First International. Almost half of the principles of organisation were borrowed from the rules of the International Association of Workers of the Central Geneva Section of the First International. The rules did not contain the Lassallean provision about producers' associations, which figured in the programmes of many socialist organisations of those years.³

The determination of advanced workers in Russia to have an independent organisation and, in spite of the Narodnik doctrine, fight for political freedoms was reflected also in the activities of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of 'Letters by Johannes Becker, Joseph Dietzgen, Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, and Others to Friedrich Sorge and Others'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 364.

² *Ibid.*, p. 373.

³ B. S. Itenberg, *South-Russian Workers' Union. Emergence and Activity*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 66-68 (in Russian).

the North-Russian Workers' Union, founded in 1876 by the cabinet-maker Stepan Khalturin and the fitter Victor Obnorsky. This union had about 200 members and the same number of sympathisers, most of whom were workers employed at factories in St. Petersburg. The Union's members were active in organising strikes. "A united all-Russia workers' organisation was the ideal pursued by the Union's leaders."¹ A keynote of its programme was that there should be solidarity among the workers of the world. "The great social battle has begun already, and we shouldn't wait; our Western brothers have already raised the banner of the liberation of millions, and it only remains for us to join them. Shoulder to shoulder with them we shall move forward and in fraternal unity fuse into a formidable militant force." Proclaiming that the Union's central aim was to "overthrow the nation's existing political and economic system," the programme accentuated the need for winning political freedom as the condition for social emancipation.

Many provisions of the programme of the North-Russian Workers' Union had points in common with the provisions of the 1869 Eisenach programme of the German Social-Democratic Party.² These largely concerned immediate demands (abolition of all estate privileges, the creation of a people's militia, the introduction of a regulated working day, compulsory education, and so on). First place was given to the demands for freedom of speech, the press, and assembly—these demands were stated in more forcible language than in the Eisenach programme. The North Union's maximum programme not only spoke of the struggle against unjust social practices but bluntly set the aim of overthrowing the existing system. It clearly defined the historic role of the proletariat³ as society's advanced class.³

Thus, in the Russian revolutionary movement the most advanced workers were becoming aware of their interests and of the significance of the political struggle and of organisation. But the influence of the Narodniks was still very strong. A striking example of this was Khalturin's defection⁴ to individual terrorism.

In the spring of 1880 members of the Narodnik organisation Black Redivision set up the South Russian Workers' Union in Kiev with a programme proclaiming socialist aims but recognising

¹ G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. III, Leningrad-Moscow, 1928, p. 189 (in Russian).

² The founders of the North-Russian Workers' Union were evidently acquainted with the same party's Gotha programme, which contained serious errors of theory. But they opted for the Eisenach programme, which was free of most of these errors.

³ A detailed examination is offered in E. A. Korolchuk, *The North-Russian Workers' Union and the Working-Class Movement of the 1870s in St. Petersburg*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 122-26 (in Russian).

terrorism as the sole means of struggle.¹ Its members conducted agitation at factories in Kiev. This Union was smashed in early 1881.

A landmark of great moment in the history of the socialist movement in Russia was the foundation of the Emancipation of Labour group in 1883 by Georgi Plekhanov, Vera Zasulich and other former Narodniks living abroad. This laid the beginning for a Marxist trend in Russian social thought and the revolutionary movement in Russia. The group played an outstanding part in spreading Marxism among Russian revolutionaries.² Approximately in the latter half of the 1880s Marxist study circles and groups began to appear in major Russian industrial cities; some of these (the groups headed by D. Blagoev and P. Tochisky in St. Petersburg, the study circles conducted by N. Fedoseyev in Kazan and later M. Brusnev's organisation in St. Petersburg, etc.) were linked to advanced workers.³

The further history of the socialist movement in Russia, the history of socialism's link-up with the working-class movement and the formation of the militant Marxist party of the proletariat of Russia is associated with Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

The first steps towards the formation of socialist organisations in the Polish lands were taken in the early 1880s. The first political party of the Polish workers, which called itself *Proletaryat*, appeared in the Kingdom of Poland in 1882. Its programme was based mainly on Marxist principles, although the influence of petty-bourgeois, Narodnik views was felt in it. This party began the propagation of Marxist ideas, one of its channels being the newspaper *Przedswit*, which was printed secretly; but within a year, in 1883, on account of mass arrests *Proletaryat* in effect ceased to exist.⁴ The same fate befell a socialist organisation founded in Warsaw in 1888 under the name *Vtoroi Proletaryat*, and also the *League of Polish Workers* founded a year later by Julian Marchlewski, Adolf Warski, and others.

The formation of the *Polish Socialist Party* was proclaimed in Paris in November 1892; it was formally constituted in 1893. The Polish Social-Democratic Party, which later took the name the *Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland*, was founded almost simultaneously on the basis of surviving groups of the *Vtoroi Proletaryat* and the *League of Polish Workers*. In addition to those already named, its leaders included Rosa Luxemburg and Bronislaw

¹ *The Working-Class Movement in Russia in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. II, Part 2, Moscow, 1950, p. 436 (in Russian).

² This is dealt with in Chapter 7.

³ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, pp. 123-67.

⁴ J. Buszko, *Narodsiny ruchu socjalistycznego na ziemiach polskich*, Krakow, 1967.

Weselowski. It adopted a Marxist programme and proclaimed that it would act in keeping with the principles of proletarian internationalism.¹ But from the very beginning reformist and nationalistic tendencies became manifest in the Polish Socialist Party.

The *Social-Democratic Party of Galicia and Silesia*, uniting Polish and Ukrainian workers, was formed in 1892 in the Polish lands incorporated in Austria-Hungary. In the next year a Socialist Party was founded in the Western Polish lands of the German empire.

Socialist organisations, initially as propaganda circles and small groups, began appearing also in the Balkans with the development of capitalist relations and the emergence of a modern industrial proletariat. The increasingly active involvement of these circles in the economic struggle of the working class created the conditions for the formation of socialist parties. The first step in that direction was taken in Bulgaria; in August 1891 a secret conference of representatives of socialist circles and groups proclaimed the creation of the *Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party*. Dimitr Blagoev, who had organised a Marxist group in St. Petersburg, was elected as one of its leaders.² This party took final shape in 1893, when it adopted its programme and rules. In Romania the *Social-Democratic Workers' Party* was constituted at a congress in March 1893.³

The *Social-Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia* was founded in 1894 in Zagreb; two years later it adopted a programme modelled on the Erfurt programme of the German Social-Democratic Party. The Yugoslav Social-Democratic Party, which consisted of advanced workers of Slovenia and saw itself as part of the Austrian Social-Democratic movement, was formed at a congress in Ljubljana in 1896.⁴ In Serbia the socialist groups that had functioned since the early 1890s failed to unite in a single organisation.

In Japan socialist study groups sprang up in the early 1890s. At first these were purely educational organisations, engaging in the study of various socialist theories and maintaining hardly any links with the working-class movement. The first organisations that set out to foster the class consciousness and solidarity of the Japanese proletariat owed their formation to the efforts of the outstanding Japanese revolutionary Sen Katayama and his associates, who re-

¹ N. N. Pukhlov, *From the History of the Polish Social-Democratic Party*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 17-97; R. Y. Yevzerov and I. S. Yazhborovskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 23-25, 35-36 (both in Russian).

² *A History of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 43-45 (in Russian).

³ *A History of Romania, 1848-1917*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 301-303; V. N. Vinogradov, *Essays on Socio-Political Thought in Romania*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 271-74.

⁴ *A History of Yugoslavia*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1963, pp. 544-45, 579-80 (in Russian).

turned to Japan in the mid-1890s from emigration in the USA. The Society for the Promotion of Unionisation was founded in 1897; its rules, unlike those of former associations of this kind, contained no provision on collaboration between labour and capital. This society was composed of workers of the artillery arsenal, the railway workshops, the ship-repair docks, and printshops.¹ Its work resulted in a growth of the number of trade unions and of their membership.

The journal *Rodo sekai*, edited by Katayama, was started in 1898 with the aim of popularising socialist ideas. Some of the articles in it were printed in English, thanks to which (and also to Katayama's extensive foreign contacts) the incipient Japanese working-class movement already then got an outlet to the international scene. That same year saw the appearance of the Society for the Study of Socialism, in which the process of demarcation between the proponents and opponents of Marxism began. Katayama, who headed the former, delivered innumerable reports and lectures in which he denounced class collaboration and stressed that an economic struggle would be futile if it were not combined with a political struggle.² The conditions gradually arose for the formation of a socialist party, but the trade-union and political organisations of the proletariat did not separate until the end of the 1890s.

Thus, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century independent socialist workers' parties, uniting the advanced, class-conscious segment of the proletariat, appeared and grew strong in nearly all countries where modern capitalist industries were established. As a process, the formation of these parties was uneven and the extent of their influence on the masses varied.

For all its diversity, in each country this process mirrored the general laws and objective needs of the working-class movement. Through its most militant representatives the working class pressed for the creation of its own political organisation capable not only of heading the struggle for vital, day-to-day interests but also of preparing the workers for the battles for the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by the socialist system. The appearance of socialist parties was a major advance towards the accomplishment of this task and marked a turning point in the history of the working-class movement.

At the time of their founding the *majority of these parties had few members*, and although their numerical strength grew quickly their membership remained relatively small in proportion to the entire mass of workers. In Germany the two workers' parties had some

¹ Sen Katayama, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

² *Essays on the Modern History of Japan (1640 1917)*, Moscow 1958, p. 375 (in Russian).

25,000 members at the time the Gotha unity congress was held. By the close of the century the SDPG membership had grown more than fourfold. In France the Workers' Party had 6,000 members in 1890; in the next eight years its membership reached 16,000. The Austrian and Hungarian Social-Democratic parties had several tens of thousands of members. In Sweden the numerical strength of the Social-Democrats went up from 6,000 to 44,000 in the course of the 1890s. In Italy the Socialist Party had roughly 30,000 members. There was the same number in Denmark, 12,000 in Norway, and 3,500 in the Netherlands.

In most countries these parties exercised an influence that was out of proportion to their numerical strength. This depended on, among other factors, how strong the given party was in the leadership of trade unions and other mass organisations: women's, youth, sports, educational. The prestige enjoyed by one party or another can be gauged, in particular, from the circulation of its press, both central and local.

In countries where socialist parties functioned legally they were able to draw upon the lessons and traditions of the First International and organise a ramified workers' press. In many cases the starting of a socialist newspaper preceded the formation of a party. In such cases the newspapers played a significant part in paving the way for organisational unity. The militant press of the socialist parties did much to educate the working class in an internationalist spirit and was the link between various national contingents of the international proletariat. "Every socialist journal," Engels wrote in 1882, "is an international centre; from Geneva, Zurich, London, Paris, Brussels and Milan threads run in all directions and cross and recross one another."¹ The most efficiently run socialist newspapers had a large proletarian readership and enjoyed considerable prestige. They used the steady flow of letters from the readership to draw concrete examples for their denunciation of capitalist exploitation and of the anti-people policies pursued by the ruling classes.

There was a particularly large network of socialist and workers' publications in Germany. During the initial years following the formation of a united workers' party, there were dozens of local papers, including nine dailies, in addition to the party's central organ *Volksstaat*. Just before the Anti-Socialist Law was enforced, the party was running 50 newspapers with a total circulation of between 160,000 and 170,000 copies. In addition, there were 15 trade-union newspapers. Far from all were of equal merit, the pro-

¹ Engels to Johann Philipp Becker, February 10, 1882, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 329.

fessional level of some was low, but for the party they were a powerful instrument of socialist propaganda. Although the law against the Socialists was a heavy blow to the workers' press, the party steadfastly diluted the effect of this law and the resistance of the authorities and gradually restored and even increased the number of its media. In 1890 it was publishing nearly 60 newspapers (including 19 dailies), while at the end of the century the German Social-Democrats had 70 newspapers (including 49 dailies). Moreover, they brought out other publications such as a theoretical journal and a journal for women workers.

In Austria the newspaper *Gleichheit*, regarded as the official party organ, was published in the 1870s; in 1889 its place was taken by *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Further, the party ran newspapers in some provincial towns. Social-Democratic newspapers were started in the Czech lands in the mid-1880s. In 1873 the Labour Party of Hungary began the publication of its own newspaper (to be exact, two—one in Hungarian and the other in German).

The Socialists in Romagna, Italy, started their own newspaper—*Avanti!*—in 1881. *El Socialista*, newspaper of the Spanish Socialists, appeared in 1886. In the latter half of the 1870s the Portuguese Socialist Party started a weekly called *O Protesto*. The socialist press in Belgium and the Netherlands was founded in the late 1870s; this same period saw the appearance of the first periodicals (published abroad) of the Polish Socialists. Socialist journals and newspapers appeared in the Scandinavian countries in the 1880s, and in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania they appeared in the 1890s before the formation of socialist parties.

For a long time the French revolutionary Socialists were unable to set up a daily newspaper. The first Marxist newspaper *L'Egalité*, like the central newspaper of the Workers' Party *Le Socialiste* that replaced it in July 1885, was a weekly. Lacking funds, the latter appeared intermittently and at no time did its circulation exceed 1,500 copies. The Workers' Party published some provincial papers as well, but most of these did not last long. Its leaders failed to gain control of one of the radical newspapers.

In Britain, *Justice*, organ of the Social-Democratic Federation, remained the only socialist paper for a long time. *Commonweal*, organ of the Socialist League, had a small circulation and was closed soon after the League adopted anarchist tactics. True, the British trade unions ran a relatively large number of newspapers.

The socialist and workers' press had to contend with serious difficulties: harassment by the authorities, a chronic shortage of funds, and a lack of trained worker-journalists. Some newspapers were able to function only because of large donations from party members from well-to-do circles. But this sometimes resulted in

the given newspaper coming under reformist influence. The workers' newspapers found it hard to compete with the powerful, efficiently-run bourgeois propaganda machine. Nevertheless, with the assistance of advanced proletarians and the efforts of party organisations the socialist press expanded quickly and became a major factor of the liberation struggles. The role of newspapers was particularly significant where persecutions prevented the normal functioning of party bodies. Extremely instructive in this context was the experience of the German Social-Democrats in the years the Anti-Socialist Law was in force. Engels assessed their newspaper of those years, *Sozialdemokrat*, as the best publication the party ever had.¹

The *election successes* of the socialist parties were a significant indication of their influence. Formerly, at elections the proletariat had to act as the extreme left wing of bourgeois democracy. The formation of socialist parties gave them the possibility of using bourgeois parliamentarism to further their class interests. Engels attached enormous importance to the election of the first socialist deputies to the Reichstag in 1874. "For the first time," he wrote, "the workers are en masse electing their own people and coming forward as an independent party."² At the close of the nineteenth century the German Social-Democrats could count on more than 2,000,000 votes. They set an example of how to win electors and showed why Socialists should be represented in parliament. In the Reichstag the Social-Democrats headed by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht tirelessly championed the interests of the working people, turning that parliament, which held the gaze of millions of people, into a rostrum for popularising socialist ideas and exposing the policies of the government and the bourgeois-Junker parties. For this, despite their immunity as members of the Reichstag, they were subjected to repressions, particularly in period of the Anti-Socialist Law. But this did not for a moment deter Bebel, Liebknecht, and their associates.

This example of the German Social-Democrats was followed by the Socialists in other countries that had elective organs. In France the socialist parties polled nearly 100,000 votes in the 1889 elections and approximately 800,000 in 1898; there was a particularly marked growth of the influence enjoyed by the Workers' Party. The Austrian Social-Democrats won about 600,000 votes at the 1897 elections, while 135,000 votes were cast for the Italian Socialists in the same year. At the turn of the century practically all the so-

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Abschiedsbrief an die Leser des 'Sozialdemokrat'", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 77.

² Engels an Wilhelm Liebknecht, 27. Januar 1874, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 615.

cialist parties in countries with parliamentary systems had MPs (56 in Germany, 31 in Belgium, 14 in Austria, 13 in France, and so forth).

These advances were a major component of the mounting role played by the working class in society. But they harboured a certain danger, a threat of "parliamentary cretinism", against which the founders of Marxism had cautioned time and again. The number of votes and mandates won at elections intoxicated some people, making them think the parliamentary activities of the workers' factions could supplant the proletarian revolutionary transformation of the entire system of social relations. Thinking along these lines was a product of that period's "peaceful" character, of the non-eruption of revolutionary events of the Commune scale throughout a period of several decades. One of the results of the overestimation of the actual possibilities for putting pressure on the bourgeois parliament was the growing significance of parliamentary factions, which claimed leadership of socialist parties.

PROGRAMME AND ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALIST PARTIES

Underlying the programme documents of socialist parties was the recognition of the basic principles of scientific communism, this being largely the result of the work of the International Working Men's Association, the influence of its programme provisions drawn up by Marx and Engels, and the ever broader dissemination of the works of the founders of Marxism. Here, a significant role was also played by the contacts that Marx and Engels personally had with leaders and militants of the working-class movement of practically all countries, and their involvement in the drafting of the programmes of the parties that were being founded. Lastly, the experience of the actual struggle brought the finest representatives of the working class and the revolutionary intelligentsia round to seeing the untenability and utopian character of petty-bourgeois socialist ideas. On basic issues the socialist parties adhered to Marxist positions.

All these parties recognised the proletariat as the decisive force with the mission of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, advocated the proletariat's participation in the political struggle, and held that the conquest of political power, the abolition of private property in the means of production, and the transfer of these means to the people was the indispensable condition for the total emancipation of the working class. All of them stressed the internationalist character of the working-class movement and the need for international proletarian solidarity.

In addition to proclaiming the movement's general principles and ultimate objectives, the programmes of most socialist parties set out immediate aims. These were the establishment or extension—depending on the conditions prevailing in the given country—of democratic freedoms: universal suffrage by secret ballot, complete freedom of the press, association, coalitions, assembly, separation of church and state and of schools and church, compulsory elementary education financed by the state or the municipal councils, abolition of the standing army, electivity of judges, free legal proceedings and legal assistance, and so forth.

The democratic demands of the socialist parties sprang, on the one hand, from the incompleteness of bourgeois-democratic reforms even in countries with a parliamentary regime, and, on the other, from the bourgeoisie's inability to implement completely those very same demands that it had once spelled out on its banners. By proclaiming democratic reforms as its immediate aim, the socialist proletariat undertook a task whose fulfilment was wanted by large segments of the people. This was a major condition of the unity of the masses around the working class.

The programmes laid special emphasis on demands mirroring the vital interests of the working class: legislative establishment of an eight-hour working day, the prohibition of child and restrictions on female labour, compulsory Sunday rest, state-funded or state-controlled social insurance, the creation or extension of factory inspection, the prosecution of entrepreneurs for industrial accidents, and so forth.

The separation of principled provisions proclaiming the ultimate aims of the struggle from what subsequently became known as the minimum programme did not take place at once. This separation came about with the gradual realisation of the utopian character of the attempts to achieve the proletariat's full economic and political emancipation immediately, and of the need to win political rights for the proletariat and other segments of the working people, and improve their living and working conditions, in other words, to build the groundwork for the final victory over the bourgeoisie.

Of course, the programmes of the various socialist parties were not identical. Each mirrored the specific way in which the given country and its working-class movement developed, the ideological and political level of a given party's membership, the firmness (or, on the contrary, pliability) of the Marxist nucleus relative to exponents of petty-bourgeois doctrines. In their assessment of this or that programme, the founders of Marxism took all these factors into account. While approving all provisions enabling the movement to advance, they came down hard on documents that dragged a given party back with concessions to petty-bourgeois, utopian

notions that had already been surmounted by the movement. This is seen in their negative attitude to the draft Gotha programme of the German Social-Democrats, to the errors of theory in the final text of that programme.¹

Letters to Bebel and Bracke, particularly Marx's *Marginal Notes to the Programme of the German Workers' Party*, written in early May 1875 and known as *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, contain an in-depth criticism of serious Lassallean errors, some vulgar-democratic propositions (borrowed from the ideological armoury of the petty bourgeoisie), and many carelessly and vaguely worded provisions.

Marx demonstrated the untenability of the draft's Lassallean demands for "undiminished proceeds of labour", "fair distribution", and so on, which reflected utopian petty-bourgeois notions that each producer could get the full product of his labour and that socialism was revolving principally around distribution.² Marx closely examined and showed the reactionary substance of the Lassallean theory of "the iron law of wages", from which it followed that under capitalism the working class could not win an improvement of its living standard and working conditions. This "law" negated strikes, setting hopes solely on universal suffrage and assistance from the state. This explains the Lassallean underestimation of trade unions, which were not mentioned at all in the draft. Writing to Bebel on the subject, Engels noted: "Considering the importance which this organisation (trade union.—*Tr.*) has attained also in Germany, it would be absolutely necessary in our opinion to mention it in the programme."³

Marx strongly criticised the old Lassallean assertion that relative to the proletariat all the other classes were "only one reactionary mass". He showed that this thesis could only isolate the proletariat from its natural allies in the struggle against capitalism.⁴

He came down hard on the draft programme's demand for a "free state", which reflected the Lassallean incomprehension of the essence of the state in a class society, and the attitude of Lassalle and

¹ For a detailed discussion of the Marx-Engels' criticism of the draft Gotha programme and of the ideological struggle over the adoption of that programme see: *Karl Marx. A Biography*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973; *Frederick Engels, A Biography*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975; E. Kundel, *Marx und Engels in Kampf um die revolutionäre Arbeitereinheit*, Berlin, 1962; *Revolutionäres Parteiprogramm — revolutionäre Arbeitereinheit*, Berlin, 1975.

² Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, pp. 19, 20, 22.

³ Frederick Engels, Letter to A. Bebel, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 34.

⁴ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 20.

his followers to the state, which they saw as standing above classes. Incomprehension of the capitalist state's class nature underlay one of the principal Lassallean delusions, namely that producers' associations, regarded as the key instrument of the transition to socialism, should be set up with assistance from the state. The inclusion of this point in the programme after its scientific and practical hollowness had been convincingly shown by Bebel, Bracke, and other German Social-Democratic revolutionary leaders¹ was a significant step back to petty-bourgeois socialist ideas. The struggle for society's radical, revolutionary restructuring on socialist lines, Marx wrote, had "nothing in common with the foundation of cooperative societies with state aid".²

What infuriated Marx and Engels was that in the draft there was not even mention of the movement's international character, of the internationalist obligations of the German Social-Democrats. This fact mirrored the narrow, national views of Lassalle and his closest associates. Moreover, Marx sharply criticised the democratic demands in the draft, showing the inaccuracy and vagueness of some of the wording and noting that there was little to distinguish them from the usual demands of bourgeois liberals.

The criticism levelled by Marx and Engels at Lassallean dogmas and notions was of immense importance for the further ideological development of the international working-class movement. True, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* was not published at the time (it was brought out in 1891), but many of the ideas had been embraced earlier by militants of the movement thanks to the writings of the founders of Marxism published in the 1870s and 1880s.

However, the significance of the *Critique* goes beyond its denunciation of Lassalleanism. The ideas propounded in it about the character and substance of the period of transition from capitalism to communism, the role of the proletarian state, and the two phases of communist society's development have become part of the ideological treasure-store of Marxism.

The critical remarks by Marx and Engels about the draft of the new programme received little attention at the Gotha unity congress. True, the final text contained Marx's point about the movement's international character and the consequent obligations of the German Social-Democrats, and also the proposition that it was necessary to "abolish the system of wage labour"; the bourgeois-liberal demand for "freedom of conscience", out of place in a socialist programme,

¹ In particular, this criticism is to be found in August Bebel's pamphlet headed *Our Aims* (1870) and in Wilhelm Bracke's pamphlet *Lassalle's Proposal* (1873), both of which were widely read.

² Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 25.

was replaced by a thesis relating to religion. The question of trade unions did not figure in the programme, but the congress passed a special resolution underscoring that these organisations were vital to the struggle of the working class. But, on the whole, the programme retained the negative features that had been so convincingly and forcefully criticised by Marx and Engels.

Some leaders of the Eisenach party (Bebel, Bracke, Dietzgen) were opposed to the inclusion of Lassallean propositions in the programme. But the others were still immature ideologically. They underrated theory in general and the significance of programme documents in particular. For them the main thing was to bridge the split as quickly as possible and create a united organisation, even at the price of concessions and compromises in theory. This could not, of course, justify capitulation to the Lassalleans. Marx and Engels assessed the Gotha programme as a major moral setback for the revolutionary German Social-Democratic movement.¹ But they decided to abstain from a public criticism of this programme since both the movement's participants and adversaries "interpreted it communistically",² while unity fostered the further advancement of the liberation struggle and enhanced the party's prestige and influence.

Further, it should be borne in mind that alongside erroneous formulations and purely Lassallean assertions, the Gotha programme contained Marxist propositions, even if some were not happily worded. For instance, the programme stated that the cause of the poverty and enslavement of the working people was the monopoly of the capitalist class over the means of production, and declared, as did the Eisenach programme, that the emancipation of the working class had to be a matter of the workers themselves. It called for public property in the means of production and the establishment of a socialist system, and underscored the international character of the working-class movement. These Marxist propositions were taken into account in the programmes of most of the other parties, notably the socialist parties that were formed in the latter half of the 1870s and the early 1880s and influenced the most by the Gotha programme (the Social-Democratic League of Denmark [1876], the Flemish Socialist Party [1877], the Portuguese Socialist Party [1877], the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party [1878], the Social-Democratic League of the Netherlands [1882], and the General Labour Party of Hungary [1880]).

Thus, the propositions about the "iron law of wages," the single "reactionary mass" allegedly opposed to the proletariat, and "direct

¹ Engels to August Bebel, October 12, 1875, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 280.

² *Ibid.*

popular legislation" found no room in this programme. Instead of calling for the creation of "socialist producers' associations with state aid" as the principal means of settling the social question, it demanded the formation of agricultural producers' associations on public land under state control.¹ The thesis about a single "reactionary mass" was also dropped in the 1878 programme of the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party. This programme stated that the "struggle for the emancipation of the working class... is a struggle for the abolition of all class domination". The point about forming producers' associations with state aid was modified to the extent that these associations were not regarded as a means of transition to socialism.²

The programme of the Social-Democratic League of Denmark did not contain the proposition about the "iron law of wages". In 1888, when the League was reconstituted into a Social-Democratic Party a new programme was adopted in which the thesis about the single "reactionary mass" was replaced by the proposition that all parties that did not recognise the task of emancipating labour from capitalist exploitation were basically opponents of Social-Democracy. The single "reactionary mass" thesis and the "iron law" proposition were not included also in the first programme of the Swedish Socialists (1882), but in all else it was based on the Gotha programme.³

The impact of the Gotha programme was inconsiderable on the programmes of a number of parties; some of these gave a broader exposition of the principles of scientific socialism. These included the programme of the French Workers' Party adopted in 1880 and drafted with the direct participation of Marx and Engels. Its preface, stating the party's general principles, was dictated by Marx to Guesde. It declared that the basic condition for the emancipation of the working class—the socialisation of the means of production—"can only be achieved as a result of the revolutionary action of the producer class—the proletariat—organised in an independent political party", and that the struggle for this aim had to be conducted "with all the means at the disposal of the proletariat, including universal suffrage".⁴ It was here that a clear demarcation line was run between the basic, ultimate goals of the movement and its immediate demands that were, in their turn, divided into political

¹ Magda Aranyossi, *Léo Frankel*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1957, S. 342; B. I. Zhelezitsky, op. cit., pp. 157-63.

² Ludwig Brügel, *Geschichte der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, Bd. 3, Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Wien, 1922, S. 80-83.

³ Knut Bäckström, *Arbetarrörelsen i Sverige*, Arbetarkultur, Stockholm, 1958, S. 208-211.

⁴ Karl Marx, "Einleitung zum Programm der französischen Arbeiterpartei", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, S. 328.

and economic demands.¹ The section of the programme dictated by Marx was characterised by Engels as a "masterpiece of cogent argumentation rarely encountered, clearly and succinctly written for the masses; I myself was astonished by this concise formulation"²

The programme envisaged a series of democratic demands (abrogation of the reactionary laws passed after the defeat of the Paris Commune, free education, the universal arming of the people, and so on) and also an improvement of the condition of the proletariat (an eight-hour working day, a ban on child labour, equal pay for men and women, and so on).

Engels approvingly assessed the programme of the Socialist Workers' Party of Spain.³ It formulated the party's aim as the abolition of classes and demanded the transfer of political power to the working people and the conversion of private into public property. The demand for democratic freedoms was highly accented; this was of particularly great significance on account of the semi-absolutist regime in Spain, especially as the anarchists, who denied the need for proletarian participation in politics, had a large following in the working-class movement. Some points of the programme touched on questions of social legislation.

The Declaration of Principles of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Austria adopted by the Hainfeld congress was on the whole in keeping with the spirit of scientific socialism. This document correctly defined the historic mission of the proletariat organised in a political party—the building of a socialist society—and underlined that internationalism was the party's key principle (this was extremely important for the proletariat of the multinational Habsburg monarchy). It contained some democratic slogans and demands in the interests of the working class and proclaimed that the party "shall always represent the class interests of the proletariat and vigorously oppose all attempts to gloss over or obscure class contradictions and the use of workers in the interests of the governing parties".⁴ But even this document said nothing about the ways and means by which the proletariat could win political power, the forms

¹ The text of the programme is on S. 570-71. This demarcation was to some extent made in the Eisenach programme, but it was much less clear-cut.

² Engels to Eduard Bernstein, October 25, 1881, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 324.

³ Frederick Engels, "A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 438. This programme was adopted in 1888, after the party received legal status; underlying it was the programme blueprinted by the party (founded in 1879) when it functioned underground. The full text of the programme is given in Karl Marx, *Miseria de la filosofía. Contestation á "La filosofía de la miseria" de Proudhon*, Madrid, 1891.

⁴ Ludwig Brügel, *op. cit.*, S. 401.

of proletarian political rule, and its attitude to other sections of working people, the peasants in particular.

A more mature understanding of Marxism was seen in the Second Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democrats compiled by G. V. Plekhanov and published in 1888 by the Emancipation of Labour group. This draft proclaimed that the means of production had to be turned over to public ownership by a communist revolution and set the aim of seizing political power by the proletariat. Only proletarian rule, it stated, "can paralyze the efforts of counter-revolution and put an end to the existence of classes and their struggle."¹ Unlike the programmes of many parties, which were largely abstract, this draft characterised the political and economic situation in Russia and the conditions under which the proletariat of Russia was waging its struggle. Moreover, it set out immediate democratic demands.

To be sure, even in this document one felt the influence of some of the Lassallean propositions of the Gotha programme, notably, the point about setting up producers' associations with state aid.

In the course of the latter half of the 1870s and in the 1880s programmes were adopted by the Socialist Labor Party of the USA (1876-1877), the first Polish Socialist Party Proletaryat (1882), the socialist organisations in Italy—the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Romagna (1883) and the Italian Workers' Party (1885), the Social-Democratic Federation of Britain (1884), the Belgian Labour Party (1885), and others. To a varying extent all these programmes proceeded from the basic propositions of scientific socialism. However, on individual points many were strongly influenced by various petty-bourgeois socialist currents. For instance, the programme of the Italian Labour Party stated that the aim was "to defend disinherited working people with the purpose of organising them by professions and uniting them in the name of the *right to live*."² The programme of the Belgian Labour Party contained vague statements about a "universally just" social system and a "fair distribution of the products of labour and social wealth".³ In the programme of the Proletaryat Party Marxist propositions were combined with recognition of economic and political terrorism as a means of struggle.⁴

A major step towards transcending influences of this kind was the new programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted

¹ Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works* in five volumes, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 407.

² Gastone Manacorda, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

³ Leon Delsinne, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁴ The text of this programme is given in *Pierwsze pokolenie marksistów polskich*, Vol. 2, Warszawa, 1962, pp. 7-16.

at the Erfurt congress in 1891. A large contribution to drawing up the final version (initially there were several drafts) was made by Engels. Despite opposition from some of that party's leaders he published Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*¹ in order to exclude Lassallean ideas from the new programme. His profoundly critical remarks helped to remove many serious shortcomings of the initial drafts, although not all of these remarks, especially on political aims, were taken into consideration. But, on the whole, this programme was on the level of Marxist theory. It scientifically expounded the party's immediate and ultimate goals on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the capitalist system, clearly showed why the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie were irreconcilable, and stressed that the class struggle would inevitably gather momentum and that the triumph of socialism was an imperative of history. "Only with the conversion of capitalist private property in the means of production ... into public ownership and the conversion of commodity production into socialist production ... can large-scale production and the steadily growing productivity of social labour become for the hitherto exploited classes not a source of poverty and enslavement but a source of the highest welfare and all-round harmonious development."²

This conversion, the programme stated, could materialise only if the working class won political power. The principle of proletarian internationalism was worded lucidly: "The emancipation of the working class is... a cause in which the workers of all civilised nations take an equal part. Appreciating this, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany proclaims its solidarity with the class-conscious workers of all other countries."³ The programme enunciated democratic aims: universal suffrage, a proportionate electoral system, direct legislation, popular self-administration, the replacement of the standing army by the arming of the people, freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, equal rights for women, secular schools, compulsory free education, an elected judiciary, free judicial proceedings, free healthcare, the abolition of indirect taxes, and the introduction of a proportionate-progressive income tax. The specific demands of the working class were formulated in a special section: legislative establishment of an eight-hour working day, a ban on the employment of children under the age of 14, the prohibition of payment for labour with goods from factory-run shops, the organisa-

¹ This work was printed in the theoretical journal of the German Social-Democratic Party *Die Neue Zeit* in January 1891.

² *Revolutionäre deutsche Parteiprogramme. Vom Kommunistischen Manifest zum Programm des Socialismus*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1964, S. 83.

³ *Ibid.*, S. 84.

tion of factory inspection, the institution of a system of state social insurance, and so on.

Although it was, on the whole, a Marxist document, the Erfurt programme had some shortcomings that came fully to light later. No account was taken of Engels' remark that the central point of the programme's political section should be the demand for a democratic republic or, since the political situation in the German empire made it impossible to declare this openly, the demand "*for the concentration of all political power in the hands of the people's representatives*".¹ Also, the programme did not emphasise the need for revolutionary methods of struggle, neither did it contain demands in the interests of the peasants nor on the agrarian question generally.

The Erfurt programme was used as a model by other parties. For example, it served as the basis for the programme adopted by the Norwegian Workers' Party in 1891. At their second congress in 1893 the Bulgarian Social-Democrats adopted a programme largely patterned, in structure and content, on the Erfurt programme. Some of the points of the theoretical section were literal translations of the corresponding points in the latter programme. The Erfurt document significantly influenced the programme of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Romania (1893), the new programme (Declaration of Principles) of the Belgian Labour Party (1894), the programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia (1896), the programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Sweden (1897), and the programme adopted by the Finnish Workers' Party at the close of the century.

While they were based mainly on the principles of scientific socialism, these documents did not consistently mirror some of its fundamental propositions. For instance, the question of the ways and means of the proletariat winning political power was given passing mention or—in most cases—avoided, while in some programmes it was reduced to winning a parliamentary majority. The provisions on the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat were not stated even in the Erfurt programme—this was later specially emphasised by Lenin.² None of these programmes raised the question of the character and functions of the state during the period of transition. In most almost nothing was said about the proletariat's allies, not even the peasants. The agrarian question was either avoided or inadequately argued (with

¹ Frederick Engels, "A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891," Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 435.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 246-47.

the exception of the socialisation of the large landed estates). The nationalities question received attention in only a few programmes.

This was partially due to the inadequate elaboration of some aspects of the Marxist teaching on the proletarian revolution, for instance, the question of the allies of the working class or the nationalities question. Also, the absence of some fundamental propositions of Marxist theory in the programmes of the socialist parties was evidence of concessions to opportunist elements. As the historical situation changed and capitalism passed to its imperialist stage, the movement faced tasks that could not be resolved without having programme guidelines in keeping with the imperatives of the new epoch.

Because they championed the interests of the masses, chiefly of the most revolutionary class, the proletarian parties had to be built up differently from the parties representing the diverse groups of the ruling classes. The structure and organisation of bourgeois parties were adapted exclusively to election struggles and parliamentary activity. The aim of the proletarian parties was from the very beginning the radical restructuring of the existing system, with the winning of political power as the primary condition. This required efficient organisation and effective discipline ensuring unity of action by all members. Most parties had rules defining their structure and functions, the powers of leading bodies and local branches, the relationships between them, and the rights and duties of members.

The Rules of the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany, adopted at the Gotha congress in 1875, defined the duties of its members as follows: "Anybody recognising the principles of the Party programme, and championing the interests of workers, by, among other things, paying dues may be a member of the Party. Those who do not pay their dues for three months shall forfeit their membership of the Party."¹ The Rules adopted at Halle in October 1890, following the repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law, amended this point for the worse: "Every person who recognises the principles of the Party Programme and supports the Party to the best of his/her ability shall be regarded as a member of the Party."²

A resolution of the Lille congress of the French Workers' Party (1890) stated that party members were obliged to recognise the party programme, abide by its rules, and pay monthly dues. Membership cards were renewable annually. However, each local branch interpreted this provision in its own way: some required applicants to have recommendations, study the party's principles and tactics within a fixed period of time, attend all meetings of the primary

¹ Dieter Fricke, *Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, 1869-1890*, S. 113-114.

² Dieter Fricke, *Zur Organisation und Tätigkeit der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (1890-1914)*, S. 23.

organisation, and so on, while others, on the contrary, regarded as a member almost anyone who expressed solidarity with socialist ideas. Naturally, this organisational looseness allowed opportunism to infiltrate the various parties much more easily.

The Rules of the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Romagna required members to recognise the "general principles of contemporary revolutionary socialism" and contribute "to the best of their ability" to the dissemination and implementation of these principles.¹ Similar requirements were stated in the Rules of the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party adopted in 1894; each person could be a member who "accepts the basic principles of the Party and does his best to support the Party financially or morally".²

The organisational structure of the First International in the shape it took at The Hague congress was used as a model by the German Social-Democratic Party and by the parties formed later. Of course, in this respect, too, each party had its own specifics stemming from national features. Nevertheless, the basic principles of organisation generally coincided.

The congress was regarded by each party as its highest body. The interval between congresses varied. The German Social-Democratic Party convened congresses annually in the period prior to the Anti-Socialist Law, but when it was banned it was able to hold only three congresses in the span of 12 years. The French Workers' Party, which was not subjected to such harassment, held only one congress in the period between 1882 and 1890 (this was the congress in Roubaix in 1884), while the Possibilists convened three congresses during the same period.

In the interim between congresses each party's highest body was the elected central body (Central Committee, Central Board, Central Council, National Council, and so forth). Its numerical composition varied from three to 20 members. While the Anti-Socialist Law was in operation, the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany was, to all practical purposes, directed by its Reichstag faction, which was its sole legal body and could therefore perform directive functions more easily. In general, in the parties that won substantial election successes the parliamentary factions played a significant role—as early as the close of the 1890s this circumstance began to have an adverse effect, for it allowed shifting the accent of party work to the parliamentary struggle to the detriment of revolutionary work among the people.

Almost everywhere the local branches of the various parties were structured on the territorial principle. This tradition was

¹ Gastone Manacorda, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

² *A History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 1, p. 39.

rooted in the relatively early stages of the working-class movement, the stages that saw the emergence of the first trade unions, which grouped their members according to the place of residence. Another factor was that the territorial principle underlay the structure of all political parties; such, too, was the structure of the local sections of the International Working Men's Association. Lastly, where a party was oriented from the very outset on a parliamentary struggle, unification on the basis of constituencies was initially seen as most convenient and expedient. However, the territorial principle was subsequently often used by the opportunists in their attempts to confine the work of various parties to sporadic election campaigns.

NEW FORMS OF INTERNATIONAL LINKS. FORMATION OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

The First International paved the way for the emergence of independent political parties of the proletariat in each country. The founding of such parties was the key condition for the further progress of the working-class movement; the movement's militants now centred their attention on this task. Prior to its fulfilment it was premature to think of forming a new international association, which could only arise on a common ideological basis as an association of independent proletarian parties functioning in each country.

Meanwhile, the international links of the proletariat continued to expand. Leaders of the movement in various countries maintained constant contact among themselves. It became customary to collect funds for striking workers in another country, and to conduct various campaigns. The socialist press gave the working-class movement in other countries increasing coverage. Articles written by leaders of fraternal parties were printed regularly. This fostered exchanges of experience and the education of the workers in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Joint appeals and statements against threats of military conflicts in different parts of the world and also against colonial expansion were issued more and more frequently. The struggle against militarism and the threat of war united proletarians of different nationalities. For example, when Britain started hostilities against Egypt in the summer of 1882, this action was denounced by socialist and workers' organisations in Britain, France, Italy, and some other countries. There were protest meetings and rallies in many cities. In the mid-1880s, when the ruling circles of France unleashed a war of conquest in Indochina, the French Socialists openly took an anti-war stand and exposed the class substance of colonial policy. Similarly determined actions were taken by the British Socialists,

who condemned the military operations undertaken to crush a national liberation uprising in Sudan in 1885. The German Social-Democrats strongly protested against the German empire's colonial seizures in Africa in the 1880s, using every possibility, notably the press and the Reichstag rostrum, to lay bare the aggressive character of Prussian militarism.¹

The Socialists were particularly active when relations between Germany and France deteriorated sharply in the latter half of the 1880s. The press, the Social-Democratic MPs, and workers' meetings emphatically denounced the chauvinistic policies of the ruling circles, showed the anti-people character of these policies, and championed commitment to proletarian internationalism.²

The joint anti-militarist and anti-colonialist actions of the socialist organisations of different countries and the more and more frequent instances of international support for strikes and of other manifestations of proletarian solidarity gave an impetus to the consolidation of international links. Towards the close of the 1880s, when the situation in the European working-class movement had changed visibly and socialist parties were in existence in many countries, the call for the earliest formation of a new international proletarian association became increasingly more vocal in the workers' press, at party congresses, and in the trade unions. The Social-Democratic Party of Germany suggested an international workers' congress. The relevant decision was passed at its own congress in St. Gallen in October 1887. The preparations for an international congress were joined by the French Workers' Party. But the French Possibilists likewise stated their intention to convene an international congress. The sponsors of both congresses decided to hold them in Paris on the centenary of the taking of the Bastille (July 1889).

A peculiar situation arose: two workers' congresses were to be held in one and the same city at one and the same time. One by revolutionary Socialists, by Marxists, and the other by reformists. Since it was evident that it was not a matter of an ordinary congress but of setting up a new international association, there was the danger that this association would fall into the hands of the reformists. Few revolutionary Socialists saw that danger at the time. Leaders of the French Workers' Party, who had, by force of circumstances, to play the main role in preparing the congress, initially acted slowly and irresolutely, while the Possibilists were very active. The leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany underrated the importance of the congress, and some of them were inclined to seek a reconciliation with the Possibilists.

¹ *Anti-War Traditions of the International Working-Class Movement*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 61-66 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 70-72.

It was not easy to surmount this sentiment. But Engels brought the leaders of the main socialist parties round to understanding how important it was for a Marxist-sponsored congress to be successful. Opportunely assessing the danger, he undertook an immense organisational task, inducing the leaders of the Workers' Party in France to act more energetically, explaining to the leaders of the German Social-Democrats that they had to join more vigorously in the preparations, and convincingly proving that it would be dangerous to combine the two congresses (as was urged by, for instance, leaders of the Belgian and Dutch Socialists). He organised a signature campaign for a congress. His efforts were rewarded. This document was supported by almost all the European socialist parties and groups. Engels drew up a plan for organisational measures and saw to it that these measures were carried out. He succeeded in drawing all prominent European Socialists into active participation in the preparations for the congress.¹

The efforts made by Engels and his associates were crowned with success. The International Socialistic Congress of Working Men opened in Paris on July 14, 1889, and was more representative than any previous congress: it was attended by delegates (some 390) from 20 countries. There were representatives from almost the whole of Europe and two non-European nations—the USA and Argentina. This was a socialist congress: most of its participants belonged to parties adhering to the platform of scientific socialism.

The opening ceremony was held in the Petrelle Hall, which was filled to capacity and decorated with slogans and red banners. Over the stage was a huge banner with the words: "Workers of all countries, unite!" The congress was opened with an inaugural speech delivered on behalf of the Organising Committee by Paul Lafargue, one of the leaders of the French revolutionary Socialists. "The delegates from the whole of Europe and from America gathered in this hall", he said, "are uniting not under the tricolour or any other national flag, they are uniting under the red banner, the banner of the international proletariat."² The delegates included Marx's and Engels' associates in the International Working Men's Association—Bebel, Liebknecht, Lafargue, Iglesias, Mesa, de Paepe, and Longuet—former members of the Paris Commune Frankel, Vaillant, and Jacklard, and many other champions of the working class. Among the German delegates attention was attracted by the young

¹ A detailed account is given in B. G. Tartakovsky, *Frederick Engels: Counsellor and Mentor of the International Proletariat (1875-1895)*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 180-218 (in Russian).

² *Protokoll des Internationalen Arbeiter-Kongresses zu Paris. Abgehalten vom 14. bis 20. Juli 1889*, Nürnberg, 1890, S. 1.

Socialist Clara Zetkin; the working-class movement of Russia was represented by the founders of the Emancipation of Labour group Plekhanov, Zasulich, and Axelrod.

The congress convened by the Possibilists was attended mainly by trade-union delegations. Most of the participants were French, chiefly representatives of Paris chambers syndicales and of British trade unions. Socialist organisations were represented (if we are not to count the Possibilists and some delegates with mandates to attend both congresses) only by the British Social-Democratic Federation.

The character of each of the congresses mirrored the changes that had taken place in the working-class movement in the 1880s: in most of the European countries the socialist parties, which had been formed by then, were the acknowledged leaders of the organised working class. However, a segment of the workers (the vast majority in Britain) supported trade-unionist policies. "The two congresses," Engels stressed, "differ fundamentally from each other: ours is a congress of united Socialists, the other is of people who do not go beyond trade-unionism... Since the grouping into two camps under two different banners has taken place without us, we should defend the honour of the socialist banner."¹

The resolutions passed by the Marxist congress reaffirmed that scientific socialism was the ideological foundation of the socialist working-class movement. The resolution on international labour legislation and labour protection stated that "labour and the whole of mankind can only be emancipated by the proletariat organised as a class also on an international scale, which must win political power in order to expropriate capital and convert the means of production into public property."² In other words, advancing a concrete programme of struggle for the direct, vital needs of the working class, the congress coupled it to the struggle for the ultimate goal, the triumph of the socialist social system. This was also the keynote of the resolution on the disbandment of standing armies and the arming of the entire people. This resolution underscored the direct connection between wars and capitalism and noted that the world-wide triumph of socialism was the best guarantee that there would be no wars.

The congress' resolutions, particularly the resolution on labour legislation and labour protection, contained a wide-ranging programme of struggle for the vital interests of the working class. It summed up the demands that had long been put forward by the workers of different countries and industries in the strike struggle,

¹ Engels an Paul Lafargue, 15. Juni 1889, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 37, S. 239.

² *Protokoll des Internationalen Arbeiter-Kongresses zu Paris*, S. 121.

needless to say, in not such a generalised form and in most cases only applicable to concrete conditions. After the resolutions of the Geneva and Brussels congresses of the First International, this was the first programme of the international working-class movement systematically presenting the immediate economic demands of the proletariat. It was emphasised that the fulfilment of these demands was "absolutely imperative in all countries where the capitalist mode of production prevails", in order to "counter the destructive influences of the existing economic system". As the First International before it, the congress called for an eight-hour working day to be established by legislation; the prohibition of child labour; restrictions on juvenile and female labour; special regulations for night work and for hazardous occupations; the establishment of a mandatory weekly day of rest; the prohibition of remuneration for work in kind or through factory-run shops; the establishment of a state institution of factory inspectors, and so on. Also there was the demand for "equal pay for equal work of men and women, irrespective of nationality" and for an "unrestricted, complete freedom of unions and coalitions".¹

For many years these resolutions of the Paris congress served as the programme foundation of the struggle of the international proletariat for an improvement of living and working conditions.

What the delegates of all the countries represented at the congress said about the condition of the proletariat and the state of the working-class movement helped to strengthen international proletarian links and educate the working class in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. The congress was given an impressive picture of the working-class struggle for emancipation throughout the capitalist world. The relevant resolution noted that from what the delegates said it followed that there was an inadequate number of "simple economic labour organisations (trade unions and similar associations) for the emancipation of the working class".² This resolution urged workers to join socialist parties and strive to win political power.

Although the tone at the congress was set by revolutionary Socialists, adherents of Marxism, there were reformist undertones in some of the speeches. However, these had little impact on the resolutions that were adopted.

The congress did not pass a decision to proclaim the creation of a new international association. However, neither its participants nor other militants of the movement had the shadow of a doubt that the history of international proletarian links was entering a new phase. The congress emphasised that there should be another

¹ Ibid., S. 122.

² Ibid., S. 124.

international congress and named its venue (Switzerland or Belgium), thereby intimating that it would be most expedient to maintain this form of international links. To all intents and purposes, the International Socialistic Congress of Working Men of 1889 thus inaugurated the Second International (although that name was adopted later) initially, as Lenin later noted, "in the shape of periodical international congresses."¹

How strong the urge was for united international proletarian action was shown by the jubilation evoked by the resolution calling for the simultaneous celebration of May 1, 1890, in all countries—in memory of the courageous, tragedy-sequel action of the Chicago workers on May 1, 1886—with demonstrations demanding legislation establishing an eight-hour working day and the implementation of other measures recommended by the congress for the immediate improvement of the condition of the workers. "This was the best of what our congress achieved,"² Engels wrote, characterising this resolution.

Tens and hundreds of thousands of workers filled the streets of industrial cities in most of the European countries on May 1, 1890.

In some cities in Germany, France, and Denmark this day was marked with more or less long strikes at a number of factories. Many cities witnessed unprecedented mass demonstrations: there were 100,000 demonstrators in Vienna, 60,000 in Budapest, between 40,000 and 50,000 in Marseilles and Lyons, 35,000 in Prague, between 20,000 and 30,000 in Roubaix, Lille, Stockholm, Chicago, and many other cities, 20,000 in Warsaw, 3,000 in Lvov, and so on. Despite an official ban, there were demonstrations and rallies in Italian cities.

In Spain and Britain the day of international proletarian solidarity was marked on the first Sunday of May—May 4. In Barcelona nearly 100,000 people demonstrated. An even larger demonstration took place in London's Hyde Park, where more than 300,000 people gathered, including representatives of French, German, and Russian Socialists.

"It seemed as though the whole population of London poured parkwards," said one contemporary report. "There were dockers there in their rough working clothes, kid-gloved, top-hatted gentlemen compositors, East End working girls in their feathers and finery."³ All demanded an eight-hour working day. This demonstration fur-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 32.

² Engels and Laura Lafargue, 27. August 1889, Marx Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 37, S. 266.

³ A. L. Morton and George Tate, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

thered the organisation and class-consciousness of the British proletariat. Engels, who was present, wrote to Laura Lafargue: "It was tremendous. England at last is stirring, and no mistake."¹

As the years went by May Day became a tradition of the international proletariat.² Every year on that day the streets of industrial cities were filled with thousands of demonstrators. The workers of individual factories, sometimes of whole districts, declared strikes in solidarity with the demands of the international proletariat—this was unprecedented.

The ruling classes sought to prevent joint workers' actions. There were clashes with police in Italy on May 1, 1890, and in France, Italy, and Spain in the following year. In the small northern French industrial township of Fourmies, a peaceful May Day demonstration was met with rifle fire. At least 50 people, including women and children, fell to the ground. Ten died instantly. The Fourmies slaughter was angrily denounced by the French workers. At a parliamentary by-election the Socialists nominated Paul Lafargue as their candidate (he was in prison for speaking out against the Fourmies shooting). This election swept Lafargue into the Chamber of Deputies.

But persecution and repressions could not prevent the assertion of this militant proletarian tradition. The idea of an annual simultaneous action of the proletariat of all countries took root quickly everywhere. In one form or another May Day began to be marked even by the proletariat of countries where an independent working-class movement was only taking shape and even then in secrecy.

In Russia the first May Day meeting was called by the Brusnev organisation in St. Petersburg. It was held on the first Sunday of May 1891 in a place that could be quickly vacated in the event of a police raid.³ The meeting was addressed by four workers: E. Klimanov, V. Proshin, N. Bogdanov, and F. Afanasyev. Proshin said in part: "We all know that we cannot hold any kind of demonstration, not only such as were held by workers in the West. I believe that all of us are now comparing our strength with that of the Western workers; but I venture to express the hope that this comparison, considering our small numerical strength, will give none of us a heavy heart. We have the strength and energy to sustain this hope." Afanasyev declared: "What we need first and foremost is an organised force, consisting of workers consciously striving for an improvement

¹ *Labour Monthly*, August 1955, p. 373.

² I. M. Krivoguz, *The Second International, 1889-1914*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 93-97 (in Russian).

³ M. Mitelman, *The First St. Petersburg May Day Meeting*, Leningrad, 1941, pp. 17-19 (in Russian).

of their condition, that could compel the government to grant them political rights, for this is the sole condition that can give us the opportunity to set about reshaping the existing economic system."¹ Brusnev later recalled that the "May Day meeting made a very good impression on all workers and united scattered study groups into a single organisation."²

Even where a large segment of the workers followed in the wake of trade-unionist reformism, May Day was marked enthusiastically: in London, for example, the May Day demonstration in 1891 involved as many as half a million people.

The next congresses of the new international association were, by and large, guided by Marxist ideas. In the 1890s there were three such congresses—in Brussels (1891), Zurich (1893), and London (1896). They thereby became a more or less regular occurrence. However, during these early years there was no central body, such as the General Council of the First International, to coordinate to some extent the actions of the organised proletariat of different countries. In 1891 Engels noted that the "old official form of 1864-1875 would have been much too restrictive for the millions of European and American workers who have united under the red banner of the fighting proletariat".³ For that reason, the voices calling for a new General Council in the early 1890s did not have the support of the majority of the leaders of the various parties. Engels, too, was utterly opposed to the idea. In saying that nothing should be done to "speed a matter for which the time is not yet ripe",⁴ his point of departure was that this should be preceded by a further organisational and ideological consolidation of the parties themselves.

In order to strengthen the ideological unity that on the whole had already been achieved, it was necessary, first and foremost, to dissociate entirely from the anarchists. For this reason the question of the attitude to the anarchists was debated at all the congresses of the new International in the 1890s. As early as the 1889 Paris congress a small group of anarchists was expelled for their efforts to wreck the proceedings with obstructions during the voting. The Brussels congress voided the mandates of representatives of anarchist organisations (three Belgians and one Dutchman). However, there were audible anarchist undertones in the speeches delivered by

¹ *The Working-Class Movement in Russia in the 19th Century*, Vol. III, Part II, Moscow, 1952, pp. 59, 62 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³ Friedrich Engels, "An das Organisationkomitee des internationalen Meetings in Mailand für die Rechte der Arbeit," Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 22, S. 201.

⁴ Engels an Laura Lafargue, 20. Juli 1891, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 38, S. 139.

Ferdinand Nieuwenhuis, leader of the Dutch Socialists. He believed that a general strike staged simultaneously in all countries was the main weapon to halt a war if one broke out. This was clearly an utopian idea. Besides, had it been to some extent realised, this would have placed countries with an organised working-class movement at a disadvantage. Although Nieuwenhuis' was a lone voice at the congress, his views had the sympathy of some people in the movement. Nieuwenhuis advanced analogous views at the next congress, in Zurich (1893). He was given no support, and representatives of the anarchist organisations were not admitted to that congress again.

During the preparations for the next, London, congress, the anarchists were more energetic, determined to obtain access to its sittings at all costs. It took the delegates a whole day to reaffirm the resolutions of the preceding congresses to deny admission to the anarchists. A special resolution was passed stating that the next congress could be attended only by those workers' organisations that recognised the need for political, including parliamentary, struggle.¹

The anarchists thus finally found themselves outside the International. This helped to unite the genuinely revolutionary, Marxist forces in the international working-class movement, although the influence of anarchist, pseudo-revolutionary phrase-mongering continued to be felt, especially in the Latin countries.

The first congresses of the new International devoted much attention to ways and means of struggle for the day-to-day interests of the working class. The resolutions on this question coupled this struggle to the end goals of the working class. For instance, the relevant resolution of the Brussels congress declared that the congress "stands on the soil of the class struggle and is certain that the working class cannot be emancipated without the abolition of class domination". This resolution called upon the workers of the world "to combine their efforts against the rule of capitalist parties, and wherever the workers have political rights to use them for emancipation from wage slavery".²

In the relevant resolution of the Zurich congress this call was complemented with the statement that the proletariat had to win political power and that the working class had to be organised for the attainment of the "revolutionary end of the socialist movement—the complete transformation of modern society, economically, morally and politically".³ The same idea was advanced in the

¹ *A History of the Second International*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1965, p. 248 (in Russian).

² *Verhandlungen und Beschlüsse des Internationalen Arbeiter-Kongresses zu Brüssel*, Verlag der Expedition des *Vorwärts* Berliner Volksblatt, Berlin, 1893, S. 14, 15.

³ *Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Kongresses in der Tonhalle Zürich vom 6. bis 12. August 1893*, Zürich, 1894, S. 40.

resolution of the London congress on the question of the economic struggle, namely that without winning political power and socialising the means of production the proletariat could only ease exploitation but not eradicate it.¹

To be sure, the examination of these issues was not confined to a general statement. The congresses considered in detail also the specific immediate demands of the international proletariat, the programme for which had been drawn up and adopted at the Paris congress. This programme was concretised and enlarged to include new demands concerning wages, the protection of female labour, and so on. The Brussels congress passed a resolution stressing that the proletariat had to use all means of propaganda and agitation to make sure that the labour protection legislation adopted in some countries was enforced.

[By advancing immediate aims and, at the same time, explaining that even their attainment would not in itself deliver the proletariat from the yoke of exploitation, the congresses of the Second International helped the socialist and other workers' organisations to fight for the vital interests of the working class without forgetting the end goals. They stressed that the proletariat of different countries had common interests. The resolutions of the Brussels and London congresses noted the significance of strikes as one of the most important and effective instruments of the working-class struggle.

The congresses debated questions related to trade unions, the forms of their work, and the need to strengthen their international links. In its resolution on these questions the Zurich congress called for the formation of national federations of trade unions in all countries and the establishment of links between them, and suggested international trade union conferences by branches.

The tactics of the socialist parties were given close attention. The relevant resolution of the London congress stated that the working class should use all the means of struggle at its disposal for the attainment of its end goal. Considerable attention was given to parliamentary tactics and also the question of the possibility and conditions for agreement with bourgeois parties. The resolutions of the Zurich and London congresses declared that such compromises should under no circumstances "menace the principles or the independence of the socialist parties,"² and that working-class policy should be independent of all bourgeois parties.³

¹ *Verhandlungen und Beschlüsse des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiter- und Gewerkschafts-Kongresses zu London, vom 27. Juli bis 1. August 1896*, Verlag Expedition der Buchhandlung Vorwärts, Berlin, 1896, S. 17, 27, 28.

² *Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Kongresses in der Tonhalle Zürich vom 6. bis 12. August 1893*, Zürich, 1894, S. 40-41.

³ *Verhandlungen und Beschlüsse des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiter- und Gewerkschafts-Kongresses zu London*, S. 17.

From the outset the international congresses gave much of their attention to questions related to the struggle against war. It was noted that on this issue the proletarians of different countries and nationalities should act in concert. In a situation where in Europe wars linked to the formation of nation states had in the main become a thing of the past and where the bellicose ambitions of the so-called great powers were determined chiefly by the interests of big capital bent on maximising profits by colonial expansion and on acquiring new raw material sources and markets, the working class was the only effective force capable of preventing wars. We have already mentioned the resolution passed on this question by the 1889 Paris congress. However, the first substantive examination of the tasks of the struggle against militarism and the threat of war was made at the Brussels congress.

By that time two main groups of European powers had been formed, and more than two decades later the conflicts between them erupted into a world war. Engels and his associates had noted time and again that these conflicts could assume gigantic proportions and spell colossal damage to the peoples, chiefly the working people. The resolution passed by the congress indicated that militarism was linked directly to the capitalist system, brought to light its mainsprings, and stressed that only "the creation of a socialist social system abolishing exploitation of man by man can put an end to militarism".¹

The congress called upon the international proletariat to "protest and fight steadfastly and vigorously against all aspirations for war and all agreements serving that purpose". It did not make any more specific recommendations for organising the struggle against wars. At the Zurich congress this call was complemented with concrete recommendations: Socialist deputies in parliaments should vote against war credits as a matter of principle, and demand a reduction of expenditures on standing armies and the gradual disbandment of these armies. The next step in this direction was taken by the London congress, which urged the formation of "courts of arbitration for the amicable settlement of conflicts between nations" and in the event the governments refused to abide by the ruling of such a court—the question of war and peace should be decided by the people themselves.²

The resolutions of the first congresses of the new international association on major issues were thus consistent with the spirit of

¹ *Verhandlungen und Beschlüsse des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Kongresses zu Brüssel*, S. 26.

² *Verhandlungen und Beschlüsse des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiter- und Gewerkschafts-Kongresses zu London*, S. 24.

scientific socialism. This was what Lenin had in mind when he wrote that the "revived international organisation of the labour movement... adopted the Marxist standpoint in all essentials".¹

Although, generally speaking, the principles of scientific socialism constituted the Second International's ideological basis, its activity inescapably reflected the actual state of the entire movement. The congresses were attended by representatives of trade unions, including those with platforms far removed from scientific socialism, and envoys from reformist organisations such as the Possibilist Federation of Socialist Workers of France (1891). The majority of the delegates to the congresses of the 1890s were revolutionary Socialists, Marxists. At the debates and when resolutions were adopted the reformists usually found themselves in the minority, but they by no means abandoned their views.

This motley composition harboured a certain danger. At the congresses of the 1890s there already were indications that an opportunist trend, prepared to sacrifice the movement's basic aims for immediate, transient successes, remain content with partial reforms, and inclined to absolutise election gains and parliamentary means of struggle, was appearing in the new International. True, the spokesmen of right-wing opportunism were in most cases rebuffed by the revolutionary Socialists, but the question of an organisational break with them, of the incompatibility of their views with affiliation to an international socialist organisation was not raised.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 32.

Chapter 6

MARXISM IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPORTUNISM. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REVOLUTIONARY THEORY

MARXISM SPREADS IN BREADTH

The triumph of Marxist principles in the International Working Men's Association paved the way for the adoption of scientific socialism by advanced elements of the working-class movement. The latter became increasingly convinced that Marxism was the only teaching answering the urgent questions that were arising in the course of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation and scientifically explaining the actual prospects of that struggle. But up to the mid-1870s, to the time the First International ceased functioning, the works of the founders of Marxism were known to a relatively small number of militants of the international working-class movement. Pre-Marxian socialist doctrines were still exercising some influence. Even many militants who were close to Marx and Engels did not entirely assimilate the key propositions of scientific socialism. This was seen, for example, in the fundamental errors of the Gotha Programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany. Socialist newspapers in many countries frequently printed theoretical articles containing confused, misconceived propositions or propounding petty-bourgeois socialist ideas.

The eclectic views of Karl Eugen Dühring, a lecturer at Berlin University—views which offered a reactionary petty-bourgeois interpretation of socialism screened by stentorian pseudo-revolutionary verbiage—were popular in Germany in the 1870s among a large section of working-class militants. In France the influence of the left Proudhonists, the ideas propounded by petty-bourgeois Socialists (Louis Blanc, Pierre Leroux, Benoît Malon, and others) continued to be felt. They strongly affected the platform of the Possibilists, who comprised the reformist wing of the French working-class movement. In Britain, the labour movement was influenced most strongly by the essentially bourgeois ideology of trade-unionism.

These alien influences had to be surmounted in the working class and countered by the revolutionary proletarian world-view. The dissemination and popularisation of scientific socialism thus became one of the pressing tasks of the working-class movement and the condition for that movement's further development. Marx and Engels attached paramount significance to this task.

In this context Marx accomplished much with the French translation of the first volume of *Capital*, which was published in the 1870s in separate issues. In order to make his work more understandable for French workers, he changed its pattern and reworded many passages. He felt that this publication "possesses a scientific value independent of the original".¹ During the last years of his life he continued working on the second and third volumes of *Capital*; they were prepared for the press and published by Engels after Marx's death, in 1885 and 1894 respectively, and gave a powerful impetus to the ideological development of the international working-class movement. The English translation of the first volume, edited by Engels, was printed in London in 1887 and then in New York. The Polish, Danish, Italian, and Spanish translations of the first volume of *Capital*, made in those years, gave advanced workers and socialist-minded intellectuals access to the ideas of scientific socialism.²

In 1891 Engels published Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*; this helped to disseminate Marxist theory and overcome relapses into petty-bourgeois socialism.

Engels' own works, written in the period from the latter half of the 1870s to the first half of the 1890s, were an outstanding contribution to the dissemination and development of Marxism. In these works he systematically expounded the component parts of Marxism, particularly the foundations of the proletarian world-view—dialectical and historical materialism. Almost all immediately won a large readership, which testified to the fact that among advanced workers seeking knowledge there was an enormous urge to go deeper into scientific socialism.³

A similarly important role in disseminating Marxist ideas in the 1870s and 1880s was played by the innumerable reprints and translations of the most important earlier works of Marx and Engels.

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 31.

² A. Uroeva, *For All Time and All Men*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969.

³ For example, in the course of 15 years (1880-1895) there were nearly 20 reissues of Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* in the German, French, English, Russian, and some other languages. His *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* was published in eight languages within 10 years (1884-1894).

Many of these reprints were undertaken either by Engels himself or on his advice. He personally selected the works that he felt were vital, obtained the old files of newspapers and journals in which they were first printed, enlisted translators, and edited the translations. He was responsible for the wide dissemination of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in the 1880s,¹ and for the fact that in this period many people became familiar with Marx's works *Wage Labour and Capital*, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, and *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*, his own work *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, and others.

At the close of the 1870s and during the 1880s there were several attempts to produce a popular exposition of the first volume of *Capital*. This was all the more important because the only work of this kind—a pamphlet by Johann Most entitled *Capital and Labour* (1873)—contained serious errors and inaccuracies. There were essential shortcomings also in the pamphlet of the Italian Socialist Carlo Cafiero entitled *The "Capital" of Karl Marx*, published in 1879. Despite their shortcomings these two pamphlets gave German and Italian workers their first acquaintanceship with the fundamentals of Marx's economic teaching. A small book entitled *Karl Marx. Capital and Labour*, written by the Dutch Socialist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, appeared two years later; it was subsequently translated into German in Austria and the USA. A more serious study, *The "Capital" of Karl Marx—a Brief Exposition with an Outline of Scientific Socialism*, which was, on the whole, approved by Engels, who pointed out its shortcomings, was produced by the French Socialist Gabriel Deville. In the course of the 1880s-1890s this book appeared in the Russian, Spanish, and Italian languages. Popular expositions of the basic ideas in the first volume of *Capital* were written also by the Polish Socialist Szymon Diksztajn (1881), the Swedish Socialist A. Wermelin (1887), and the Russian revolutionary Pavel Argunov (his pamphlet was printed secretly on a hectograph in 1883-1884). A particularly large readership was won by Karl Kautsky's *The Economic Teaching of Karl Marx* (1887); the shortcomings

¹ In the course of the 1880s and during the first half of the 1890s there were four German reprints and also French, Russian, English, Danish, and Spanish translations of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, brought out with Engels' participation and edited by him. In addition, during those years the *Manifesto* was published in some other languages; its full text was printed in the socialist press of many countries (see *Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Brought Out in Their Lifetime. A Bibliographical Index*, Part I, Moscow, 1974, pp. 66-73 [in Russian]).

in the manuscript were removed by Engels, who edited it carefully. It was subsequently translated into several languages.¹

Marx's great work *Capital* captured the minds of proletarian militants. In the preface to the English edition of the first volume of *Capital* (1886) Engels had every reason to note: "That the conclusions arrived at in this work are... becoming the fundamental principles of the great working-class movement ... that everywhere the working class more and more recognises, in these conclusions, the most adequate expression of its condition and of its aspirations, nobody acquainted with that movement will deny."²

Marx's pupils and followers did much to spread the ideas of scientific socialism and combat currents alien to the proletariat. Their works, which popularised various aspects of the Marxist teaching, were widely read and played a large role in ensuring the triumph of Marxism in the working-class movement.

August Bebel's *Woman and Socialism*, written in 1879, was read avidly. It was the first Marxist work presenting a detailed analysis of the causes behind the inequality of women in capitalist society. Moreover, it offered a popular exposition of the basic ideas of scientific socialism, examined the class essence of bourgeois society, and popularised the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat and the programme propositions of the Socialist Party. By 1895 there had been 25 reprints of Bebel's book in 15 languages. Other well-known works by him were *The Peasant War in Germany* and *Our Aims*, and also his speeches in the Reichstag.³

A strong impetus to the popularisation of Marx's teaching was given by Wilhelm Liebknecht's *The Spider and the Fly* (which was reissued time and again in many languages) and other works dealing with different aspects of Marx's teaching, chiefly those showing that the working class had to adopt revolutionary tactics: *From Defence to Attack*, *On the Political Position of Social-Democracy Particularly with Respect to the Reichstag*, *Trutz—Copperhead*, *On the Agrarian Question*, *Knowledge Is Power—Power Is Knowledge*, and *On March 18*.

Josef Dietzgen, a talented self-taught philosopher who came from a working-class family, contributed enormously to the popularisa-

¹ *Essays on the History of the Ideological Struggle Over Karl Marx's "Capital"*. 1867-1967, Moscow, 1968, pp. 76-94 (in Russian).

² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 16.

³ August Bebel brilliantly expounded the basic socialist principles in a draft budget debate in the Reichstag in January 1893. His speech was published as a pamphlet entitled *The State of the Future and Social-Democracy* and was quickly sold out. This was noted with pleasure by Engels, who said that the speech was "splendid" and that the pamphlet was a "masterpiece in which even some minor theoretical inaccuracies, inevitable in a speech, change nothing" (Engels an August Bebel, 9. Februar 1893, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, S. 26).

tion of Marxist philosophy and to protecting it from distortions and attacks with his *The Religion of Social-Democracy*, *Scientific Socialism*, *The Future of Social-Democracy*, and *Excursions of Socialism into the Theory of Cognition*. A number of serious works on history, economics, and philosophy that enlarged upon and propagated scientific socialism were written by Karl Kautsky, who in those years adhered to a Marxist platform.

Paul Lafargue's works on political economy, philosophy, and the tactics of the Socialist Party were read widely in socialist circles in and outside France. Some were translated into foreign languages. His incisive pamphlets, such as *Right to Idle* and *Sold Appetite*, which exposed the essence of capitalism, were extremely popular. Jules Guesde enunciated the basic propositions of the Marxist economic doctrine in articles and pamphlets aimed against bourgeois economists and reformists. These included *Collectivism in the Collège de France* and *Public Services and Socialism*.

The writings of G. V. Plekhanov were outstanding among the Marxist works of this period. In the early 1890s his works (*For the 60th Anniversary of Hegel's Death*, *Anarchism and Socialism*, *N. G. Chernyshevsky*, and, later, a number of articles criticising the revisionism of Bernstein) began to appear in foreign languages, chiefly German.

Articles and pamphlets enunciating the teaching of Marx, the programme aims of the socialist parties, and the tactics of the revolutionary proletariat were written by E. Belfort Bax, Edward Aveling, and Eleanor Marx-Aveling in Britain, Antonio Labriola in Italy, Dimitr Blagoev in Bulgaria, and many other leading personalities of the working-class movement and socialist publicists. Blagoev's *What Is Socialism and Is There a Soil for It in Our Country?* and *Our Apostles* provided the ideological-theoretical basis for the founding of a Social-Democratic Party in Bulgaria.

The periodic press was a major medium for the dissemination of Marxism. All socialist newspapers carried articles popularising various aspects of the teaching of Marx. Marx and, to a larger extent, Engels wrote for the German *Vorwärts* and *Sozialdemokrat*, the Austrian *Gleichheit* and *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and the French *L'Égalité* and *Le Socialiste*. As a rule, prefaces and introductions to reprints of Marx's and Engels' own works, and also to the works of some other authors were in the 1880s first published by Engels in the *Sozialdemokrat*. Among these were, for example, *On the History of the Communist League* (introduction to the pamphlet *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*), *The Labour Movement in America* (preface to the American edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*), and the foreword to the second printing of *The Housing Question*. Many newspapers regularly sponsored debates on

theoretical problems, and this helped the workers to understand these problems.

Socialist, including Marxist, theoretical journals were first started in the 1880s. The most important of these was the German Social-Democratic *Neue Zeit*, whose publication began in 1883 in Stuttgart. It was the first to publish many of Engels' works, including *Marx and Rodbertus* (foreword to the first German edition of *The Poverty of Philosophy*), *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, and *On the History of Early Christianity*. In *Neue Zeit* Engels published Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. The journal's contributors were not only leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany—August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Karl Kautsky, Franz Mehring, and Clara Zetkin—but also Socialists of other countries: Paul Lafargue, G. V. Plekhanov, Pavel Axelrod, Gabriel Deville, Pablo Iglesias, Eleanor Marx-Aveling, Edward Aveling, E. Belfort Bax, and Friedrich Adolph Sorge. For its composition of contributors, the range of its themes, and its circulation this was essentially an international journal with immense prestige in the international social-democratic movement. The journal was actively critical of opponents and vulgarisers of scientific socialism, of bourgeois theorists. True, the editorial staff headed by Kautsky was not particularly fastidious as to the choice of contributors, and this (especially during the journal's early years) was often criticised by Engels. But, by and large, in the 1880s-1890s it played a useful role and tangibly contributed to the ideological triumph of Marxism in the international working-class movement.

Theoretical journals were also published by other socialist parties. In France these were *La Revue socialiste* (which was founded in 1885 and had representatives of various socialist trends as its contributors, *L'Ere nouvelle* (1893-1894), and *Le Devenir social* (1895-1898). In 1891 the Italian Socialists started the fortnightly journal *Critica sociale*, which played a large role in disseminating Marxism in Italy. In Romania the journals *Contemporanul* and *Rivista socială* were published in the 1880s, and the journal *Critica socială* in the early 1890s. In Britain the socialist journal *Today* was published in the same period. Polish Socialist emigres printed the journal *Przedswit* in London, and in Bulgaria the journal *Sotsial-demokrat* was printed for some time in the 1890s. Several issues of *Sotsial-demokrat* were brought out in Russia in the 1890s by the Marxist Emancipation of Labour group.

During the first half of the 1880s some socialist parties and organisations began to bring out series of works written for the mass reader, participants in the liberation struggle, in order to popularise scientific socialism. For instance, during the period the Anti-Social-

ist Law was in operation and the editorial office and printshop of *Sozialdemokrat* were first in Zurich and then in London, the German Social-Democrats began the publication of the works of the founders of scientific communism and also of Bebel, Liebknecht, Lafargue, Dietzgen, Deville, Bracke, and other Socialists. The publishers regularly turned to Engels for advice in selecting works. Some were edited and prefaced by him. A similar series under the general heading *Library of Modern Socialism* was published in the course of more than 10 years in Geneva by the Emancipation of Labour group. The series included *Ludwig Feuerbach* and *On the Social Relations in Russia* by Engels, and works by Lafargue, Liebknecht, and Plekhanov. This *Library* gave the Russian Socialists and advanced workers the possibility of reading some of the works by the founders of scientific socialism and their followers.

In the latter half of the 1880s series of this kind began to be brought out also by Danish, Spanish, Italian, Polish, and Dutch Socialists. The *Socialist Library* published in Denmark from 1885 onwards, included the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the first volume of *Capital*, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, and works by Bebel, Bracke, and others. *Socialism*, a work by the leader of the Danish Social-Democrats Peter Knudsen was published in the same series.

The French Workers' Party regularly printed low-priced pamphlets enunciating the basic propositions of Marxism and the party's programme and analysing some topical political problems. However, alongside works by the founders of Marxism and their followers these series contained works by spokesmen of petty-bourgeois socialist currents. Pamphlets by Lassalle were included even in the German *Social-Democratic Library*.

Verbal propaganda was an important means of disseminating the ideas of scientific socialism. It was conducted by diverse methods, depending on the political situation, national traditions, the availability of cadres more or less versed in theory, and so on. The forms most widespread in West European countries were meetings of local groups and organisations or simply talks by Socialists with workers wishing to know more about social problems or desiring knowledge. These talks were usually conducted in small beerhalls, where local inhabitants customarily gathered in the evenings. The keepers of these halls were in many cases party members or sympathisers.

The talks were chiefly on questions of the day-to-day life and labour of workers but, as a rule, they were linked to the general tasks of the socialist movement. The efficacy of these talks depended on the training level of the Socialists conducting them, on their ability to attract and hold the attention of listeners, and lastly on the prestige enjoyed by them among workers. In large towns and industrial

centres the socialist parties sponsored individual and sometimes cycles of lectures on theoretical problems, and organised mass meetings addressed by the most well-known and popular party leaders. In Paris, for example, the Socialist Library Circle founded by the Workers' Party organisation sponsored monthly lectures on Marxist political economy and philosophy beginning in 1884. The lectures on Marx's economic teaching were delivered by Deville and on materialist philosophy by Lafargue. These attracted many people and were a school for future militants of the movement, for proponents of scientific socialism. Engels thought very highly of them. "Your lectures and those of Deville are excellent,"¹ he wrote to Lafargue on May 10, 1884. Guesde and Lafargue spoke and lectured regularly at rallies and workers' meetings. In the period from 1882 to 1890 Guesde addressed 1,200 meetings in different parts of France.²

The West European Socialists conducted vigorous election campaigns, which gave their candidates additional propaganda opportunities. Considerable work was accomplished in this context by Socialist MPs; they used the parliamentary rostrum, met with constituents, and so forth. This form of verbal popularisation of socialist ideas was especially important in Germany during the years of the Anti-Socialist Law. It gave them the then only legal possibility for agitation among the workers. In France Lafargue regularly toured the country after he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. "Lafargue," Engels wrote, "uses his deputy remuneration and free railway ticket to tour the entire country from Lille to Toulouse and speaks with unqualified success."³

Many leading Socialists spoke and lectured on the theoretical questions and problems of the working-class movement in their own and in foreign countries. In September-December 1886, for instance, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Eleanor Marx-Aveling, and Edward Aveling toured the USA with lectures on scientific socialism, the history of the socialist movement, and other subjects (moreover, they collected donations to the election fund of the German Social-Democrats). Their lectures helped to sow the seeds of socialist doctrine among English-speaking workers in the USA.⁴ Tours of this kind contributed to the spread of scientific socialism and the strengthening of international proletarian links.

¹ Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 145.

² Claude Willard, *Les guesdistes. Thèse pour le doctorat ès lettres présentée à la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de l'Université de Paris*, Éditions Sociales, Paris, 1965, p. 32.

³ Engels an Friedrich Adolph Sorge, 5. März 1892, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 38, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, S. 289.

⁴ Philip S. Foner, op. cit., p. 43. In those years a very large segment of the members of the Socialist Labor Party of the USA consisted of workers of German origin.

In countries where socialist activities had to be conducted in secrecy or in semi-legal conditions, scientific socialism was disseminated mainly through small study groups consisting of advanced workers. These groups produced future professional revolutionaries. This was basically how scientific socialism was spread in tsarist Russia and some Balkan countries, where the police regime ruled out any other possibility for verbal propaganda. From the beginning of the 1890s, when May Day became a regular red-letter occasion, the Socialists used it for agitation and propaganda. The revolutionary movement in Russia in the 1880s-1890s provides striking examples of how Marxism was spread through secret workers' study groups.¹ Despite unceasing police harassment, these groups functioned not only in the capital but in all more or less large industrial centres. They were a school training worker revolutionaries and provided the core for revolutionary Social-Democratic organisations—the leagues of struggle for the emancipation of the working class.²

Thanks to the efforts of the socialist parties and individual groups militants of the movement acquired an increasingly more profound knowledge of scientific socialism, shaking off the influence of various petty-bourgeois socialist theories. This strengthened the working-class movement, accelerated the organisation of the proletariat, and infused the workers with a growing class awareness as they fought for their vital demands. Assimilation of the Marxist doctrine helped Socialist leaders to resolve current problems and correctly chart the tactics of struggle.

THEORETICAL GENERALISATION OF NEW EXPERIENCE

A hallmark of Marxism as a living, constantly developing theory is that it does not confine itself to noting the results achieved by the movement but strives to determine the ways and means of the movement's further advance and, in keeping with obtaining historical conditions, determine how to achieve immediate and end goals. By generalising the experience of the proletariat's class battles and analysing the forms and methods employed by it, Marxist theory actively influences these battles and reveals the prospects for them. The stronger the working-class movement grows and the larger becomes the number of workers drawn into a conscious struggle, the more productively does the theory of scientific communism itself develop.

¹ Z. H. Saralieva, *Karl Marx's "Capital" and the Working-Class Movement in Russia (1895-1917)*, Moscow, 1975 (in Russian).

² *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, pp. 159-67, 216-56 (in greater detail—Chapter 7).

Naturally, the new stage of the working-class movement induced Marx and Engels to look closely into key theoretical problems of social development. It was necessary to generalise the experience that had accumulated, use it to give a more profound dimension to and concretise and specify various propositions, and rebuff speculative attitudes to new processes and phenomena and vulgarisations of revolutionary theory springing from superficial knowledge.

"Both Marx and I," Engels wrote on November 20, 1876, "have to write quite definite scientific works that, as we have hitherto seen, nobody else can or even wants to produce. We must use the present tranquil period of world history to complete them. Who knows how soon some development again brings us into the thick of the practical movement; more so must we use the short respite to at least somewhat develop the similarly important theoretical aspect."¹

Volumes II and III of *Capital* were a major step amplifying Marx's economic doctrine.

In the second volume Marx analysed the circulation of capital and social reproduction and, on that foundation, formulated the basic laws governing the realisation of the social product in capitalist society. He showed that under the capitalist system the social product could not be distributed proportionately among industries; this inevitably led to various imbalances, to partial and general crises in production and in finances. These conclusions were of paramount significance for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. Marxists-Leninists continue to rely on them in their struggle against theories claiming that capitalism will "collapse of its own accord" and against the apologetic arguments attributing "harmonious development" to the capitalist economy. Marx's conclusions are the key to understanding the economic laws of a communist society.²

The third volume of *Capital* deals with the capitalist mode of production as a whole, taking production and circulation in their unity. Marx researched the forms of capital in commerce, credit and money circulation, and agriculture (ground rent) and showed how surplus value was distributed among the different groups of exploiters. He traced the process of concentration and centralisation in industry and finances that led to the creation of large joint-stock companies. He laid bare the specifics of capitalist development in agriculture and characterised the significance of the stratification of the peasants and of the growth of the rural proletariat for the strategy of the working class. This volume gave Marxists further data showing

¹ Engels an Johann Philipp Becker, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 34, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, S. 227.

² V. S. Vygodsky, *The Economic Substantiation of the Theory of Scientific Communism*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 242-51 (in Russian).

that the contradictions implicit in capitalism would inevitably exacerbate and reinforced the theoretical substantiation of the need for the socialist revolution.

One of the most important of Marx's last theoretical works was *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, which is justifiably seen as a basic document of scientific communism; in it Marx summed up his entire doctrine on the state and the socialist revolution.

Showing that there were no grounds for the Lassallean faith in the existing state, Marx conclusively demonstrated that the state power of the bourgeoisie was hostile to the proletariat, that by virtue of its nature it could not be supraclass. The theory of scientific communism was advanced significantly by Marx's elaboration, in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, of the role of the state after the socialist revolution. He demonstrated that society's revolutionary transformation would inevitably take a relatively long time and that there had to be a proletarian state to carry out this gigantic creative work. "Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."¹ He substantiated this proposition scientifically, generalising the extensive experience of the international working-class movement. This proposition was borne out by subsequent developments that led to the triumph of the socialist revolution first in Russia and then in some other countries. In all these countries the proletariat, after winning political power, successfully used it for the building of socialism.

The greatest service rendered by Marx was that in opposition to vague, imprecise ideas about communism he gave a scientific analysis based on the understanding that communism is a social system undergoing transformations and developing in accordance with objective laws. He identified these laws in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, thereby making an invaluable contribution to the theory of scientific communism and the practice of building a communist society. The pillar of this contribution is the teaching that there are two stages, two phases, in the development of communism as a social system.

Marx made it clear that after the means of production became public property the basic principle of a communist society—"from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"—would by no means be implemented at once. At the first phase of communism—under socialism—the principle that would inevitably become operative would be "from each according to his ability, to each according

¹ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 26; V. I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 233, and "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 388.

to his work", for it would be a society "just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges".¹ This is the phase at which society must achieve the level of economic, cultural, and moral development and ensure the upgrading of material production to the extent making it possible to go over to the second, higher phase of communism. This will take place not directly from capitalist society: the higher stage will develop "on its own foundations",² on the basis of a social system where public property in the means of production prevails, a system free of antagonistic classes, and where production and distribution are governed by socialist principles.

These profound ideas of Marx were later comprehensively developed by Lenin.

The significance of Marx's economic doctrine for the working-class movement was shown by Engels in his prefaces to the volumes of *Capital* prepared by him and also to the new reprints of the first volume. After Marx's death, Engels, to quote Lenin, "continued alone as the counsellor and leader of the European socialists".³

Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*,⁴ *Anti-Dühring*, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, and his letters of the first half of the 1890s were an outstanding contribution to the development of Marxist philosophy, of dialectical and historical materialism.

In writing *Anti-Dühring*, which took nearly two years, Engels was motivated by the situation in the German working-class movement in the latter half of the 1870s, by the decline of the party's ideological level as a result of the Eisenachers uniting with the General Association of German Workers on the basis of a compromise programme. Johann Most, Friedrich Wilhelm Fritzsche, Louis Viereck, and other Social-Democratic journalists, many of whom had been Lassalleans, became committed to the reactionary utopian ideas of Dühring and actively popularised them in the party press. "Utopian socialism which for decades we have been clearing out of the German

¹ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 17.

² Ibid.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 26. For Engels' contribution to the development of Marxism see *The Theorist Engels*, Moscow, 1970 (in Russian).

⁴ *Dialectics of Nature*, on which Engels worked in 1873-1876 and in 1878-1883, was not completed by him and was not published in his lifetime; its first edition was brought out in the USSR in 1925. But many of the conclusions drawn by Engels as he wrote this work were reflected in *Anti-Dühring*, which was already then widely read in the revolutionary working-class movement.

workers' heads with so much effort and labour ... *utopian* socialism, playing with fantastic pictures of the future structure of society, is again rampant, and in a much more futile form.... It is natural that utopian theories, which *before* the era of materialistic critical socialism contained the rudiments of the latter within itself, can now, coming belatedly, only be silly, stale, and basically reactionary."¹

In addition to Dühring and his followers, the so-called Katheder-Socialists continued to exercise a negative ideological influence on the working-class movement. In their writings, including popular pamphlets, they preached bourgeois-reformist ideas under the guise of socialism. It became obvious that the Marxist theory had to be defended. This was what made Engels put aside his studies of the natural sciences and in the autumn of 1876 get down to writing a work denouncing the views of Dühring. The polemic, Engels wrote, "gave me, in connection with the very diverse subjects to be touched on here, the opportunity of setting forth in a positive form my views on controversial issues which are today of quite general scientific or practical interest."²

Anti-Dühring (the full title is *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*) was printed in instalments in *Vorwärts* in the period from January 1877 to July 1878. The first separate edition was brought out in Leipzig in 1878.

The appearance of *Anti-Dühring* strongly influenced the subsequent ideological evolution of the international working-class movement. Engels himself described the work as an attempt to "give an encyclopaedic outline of our understanding of philosophical, natural-scientific, and historical problems",³ an "exposition of the dialectical method and of the communist world outlook fought for by Marx and myself".⁴ *Anti-Dühring* is the first work in which all three basic components of Marxism—dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, and scientific socialism—are presented in their close interrelation and interdependence, in their organic unity. Engels' development of the key principles of Marxist materialist philosophy was of paramount significance: the material nature of the world, movement as a form of the existence of matter, and the objective character of categories such as space and time. This work offers a profound exposition of the laws of materialist dialectics, giving it the classic definition as "the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought",⁵ showing

¹ Marx to Friedrich Adolph Sorge, October 19, 1877, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 290-91.

² Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 10.

³ Engels an Eduard Bernstein, 11. April 1884, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 136.

⁴ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

the content and significance of its basic features, and demonstrating the hollowness of the metaphysical method of thought. Considerable attention is given to questions related to historical materialism—the application of materialist dialectics to the study of the history of human society; here Engels scientifically substantiates the principle of historicism in the study of society. Using the categories of equality and morality as his examples, he shows the relativity of so-called eternal truths, their dependence on changes in the socioeconomic system. In connection with the vague and confused arguments about equality in the Gotha Programme, it was extremely important to give a Marxist definition of this concept. Engels wrote that “the real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the *abolition of classes*”¹.

Engels’ criticism of idealist theory is of great significance. According to that theory violence plays the definitive role in the development of society. Showing that this is scientifically untenable, Engels wrote: “...All social power and all political force have their source in economic preconditions, in the mode of production and exchange historically given for each society at each period.”² Contrary to the Lassalleans and their slogan of a “free people’s government” and to the anarchists, who demanded the immediate abolition of the state as such, Engels stressed that although its functions would change gradually the state would exist even after the revolution, for the entire period of transition from capitalism to communism. He wrote that “the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production”.³

In *Anti-Dühring* Engels deals at length with the history of scientific socialism, spelling out its fundamental distinctions from utopian socialism and showing that historical conditions predicate socialism’s conversion from a utopia into a scientific theory resting on a profound analysis of capitalism’s contradictions, a theory whose cornerstone is the proposition that the proletariat has a universal historic mission and that the proletarian revolution is inevitable.

Engels accentuated the important role of social consciousness under communism, writing: “Anarchy in social production is replaced by plan-conforming, conscious organisation.... The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature.... Only from that time will man himself, with full conscious-

¹ Ibid., p. 128.

² Ibid., p. 258.

³ Ibid., p. 333.

ness, make his own history.... It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom."¹

Engels' book mirrored his own and Marx's views. Marx not only read it in manuscript but contributed a chapter on the history of political economy.

Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, first published in *Neue Zeit* in 1886 and brought out in book form in 1888, was a major landmark in the development of the philosophical foundations of the proletarian world outlook. Along with the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and *Anti-Dühring*, it became, to quote Lenin, a handbook "for every class-conscious worker".²

This was the first work to comprehensively show the relationship between Marxist philosophy and the doctrines of Marxism's ideological predecessors and its fundamental distinctions from all former philosophical doctrines and systems. The significance of this in the situation obtaining at the time was due to the resurgence in Germany of interest in classical German philosophy and the attempts to give it a new, reactionary interpretation. Engels showed the historical place of Hegel and Feuerbach in the development of philosophical thought and the role played by their teachings in the formation of the philosophy of Marxism. He brought to light the contradiction in Hegel's philosophy between its revolutionary method—dialectics—and the essentially conservative nature of its system. Further, he showed the limitations of Feuerbach's materialism, its mechanistic and metaphysical character, and his idealistic approach to social phenomena and the history of human society.

Engels gave a classical definition of the paramount question of philosophy — "the question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of the spirit to nature"—and examined its other aspect—the cognisability of the world, "the identity of thinking and being".³ Showing that the neo-Kantian attempts to link idealism to materialism were untenable, Engels convincingly refuted the assertion that the world was not cognisable. He substantiated the principle of philosophy's commitment, demonstrating that in the long run the struggle between philosophical schools was no more than a reflection of the struggle between classes and parties.

He devoted a large part of this work to an exposition of the fundamentals of dialectical and historical materialism. One of the chapters gives a comprehensive outline of the materialist under-

¹ Ibid., pp. 335-36.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 24.

³ Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 346.

standing of history. In contrast to the idealistic interpretation of the laws of history, Engels showed that "the course of history is governed by inner general laws",¹ that the domination of accident was only seeming and expressed the superficial side, not the essence of phenomena. He accentuated questions such as the correlation between consciousness and spontaneity, the role of the individual and the masses, and accident, and necessity in social development. "Men," he wrote, "make their own history, whatever its outcome may be, in that each person follows his own consciously desired end, and it is precisely the resultant of these many wills operating in different directions and of their manifold effects upon the outer world that constitutes history."² In the final analysis, class interests expressing status in social production are the motor determining the actions of individuals. While showing that "in modern history the will of the state is, on the whole, determined... in the last resort, by the development of the productive forces and relations of exchange",³ in other words of the economic basis, Engels underscored the certain independence of superstructural elements—the state, law, ideological superstructures—and their ability to exercise a reverse influence on the development of economic relations.

The latter idea was enunciated by Engels in more detail during the first half of the 1890s in response to the relatively wide currency gained by a vulgar understanding of historical materialism that reduced it to what was termed "economic materialism". The proponents of this approach contended that economic relations were the sole factor determining the entire process of history, giving shape to politics, law, and various ideologies; they denied the reverse impact of political and ideological factors on economic development. Engels' letters of this period, linked together by the unity of content, were a criticism of this sort of vulgar interpretation of historical materialism. Most of these letters appeared in the press (usually abridged) soon after Engels died. "According to the materialist conception of history," he wrote, "the *ultimately* determining factor in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I have ever asserted more than this. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic factor is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase".⁴

When opportunist currents came increasingly to the fore in the socialist parties, Engels felt that it was particularly important to

¹ Ibid., p. 366.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 370.

⁴ Engels to Joseph Bloch, September 21-22, 1890, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 394.

reveal the class substance of all forms of the bourgeois state, including the democratic republic. In *Anti-Dühring* and especially in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* he drew upon the latest advances in historical science for the first-ever detailed exposition and substantiation of the Marxist theory of the origin of the state. In *The Housing Question* he put forward the proposition that the bourgeois state was a "collective capitalist", the "organised collective power of the possessing classes".¹ Further, he made the point that the proletariat was interested in the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic republic. Like Marx, he saw this as a form of state most favourable to the proletariat's struggle for political power. He attached paramount significance to the proletariat and its party making the maximum use of legal opportunities, which, while being limited, offered bourgeois-democratic freedoms.

Engels amplified Marx's theory that the proletarian party was the agency that had to organise the proletarian masses, lead them at the decisive moment in the assault on capitalism with the aim of winning political power, and head society's socialist reorganisation following the attainment of that goal and after breaking the resistance of the deposed exploiting classes. He underlined the party's leading role relative to other organisations of the working class, notably the trade unions. "At the side of, or above, the Unions of special trades," he wrote in 1881, "there must spring up a general Union, a political organisation of the working class as a whole."²

His analysis of the lessons of the first socialist party formed on a national basis, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, led him to conclude that the guarantee of the successes and strength of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation lay in its waging the struggle "pursuant to its three sides—the theoretical, the political and the economico-practical",³ that both the economic struggle and political activity of the proletariat were aimed at the attainment of its end goal. That is what Engels had in mind when he wrote of the advanced role of the German Social-Democrats after the centre of the working-class movement had shifted to Germany: "The German Communists are such because through all the intermediate stages and compromises, created not by them but by the course of history, they clearly see and steadfastly pursue the end goal: the abolition of classes and the creation of a social system in which there will

¹ Frederick Engels, "The Housing Question", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 347.

² Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Articles on Britain*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 373.

³ Frederick Engels, "Preface to *The Peasant War in Germany*", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 170.

be no room for private property in land and in all other means of production."¹

He attached great significance to the ideological unity of the proletarian party. Every workers' party, he wrote, should have a "definite programme".² "When a party is formed without a programme, a party which anybody can join, it is not a party,"³ he wrote in November 1882. In comments on the draft SDPG programme of 1891, he noted that the programme of a revolutionary socialist party could not be based on disputable theoretical propositions; it had to state the ultimate aims and immediate demands of the proletariat clearly, and be "as short and precise as possible".⁴

While making exacting demands on the programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which by that time had more than 20 years' experience of revolutionary struggle and cadres trained in Marxist theory, Engels adopted a somewhat different approach to the programmes of the socialist organisations of countries where the working-class movement was at a lower level of development. He felt that the programmes of such socialist organisations could initially contain provisions comprehensible to the rising proletarian masses. But he made the condition that they should be free of bourgeois and utopian influences, in other words, that they should be "a truly working-class platform".⁵ Such programmes, he believed, could be the first step towards the assimilation of the theory of scientific socialism.

Citing the experience of the first British and American socialist organisations, he noted that any attempt to force upon workers "things which, at present, they cannot properly understand"⁶ would inevitably lead to isolation from the masses, to the party's conversion into a sectarian group, and ultimately make it easier for the bourgeoisie to continue influencing the working class ideologically. The Socialists, he wrote, should "go in for any real general working-class movement, accept its *faktische* starting point as such, and work it gradually up to the theoretical level by pointing out how every mistake made, every reverse suffered, was a necessary consequence

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Flüchtlingsliteratur", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 533.

² Frederick Engels, "The English Elections", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Articles on Britain*, p. 363.

³ Engels an Eduard Bernstein, 28. November 1882, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, S. 402-03.

⁴ Frederick Engels, "A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 429.

⁵ Frederick Engels, "The Labour Movement in America", Marx, Engels, *On the United States*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979, p. 289.

⁶ Engels to Florence Kelley-Wischnewetzky, December 28, 1886, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 377.

of mistaken theoretical views in the original programme".¹ Consequently, in criticising the striving of some socialist organisations to leap across a historically inevitable stage of the movement, he cautioned them against the danger of underestimating theory. In 1887 he wrote that "all our practice has shown that it is possible to work along with the general movement of the working class at every one of its stages without giving up or hiding our own distinct position and even organisation".²

With the formation of national socialist proletarian parties and a new international proletarian association it became imperative to further the elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation. The scale of the working-class movement grew steadily, producing innumerable facts, whose comparison and generalisation provided material for new conclusions and for specifying and developing earlier propositions. In his introduction to Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*, written a few months before his death, and also in the article *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* Engels summed up, as it were, the ideas he had put forward in numerous letters, articles, and scientific works of those years.

Once more returning to the lessons of the Commune, he developed Marx's proposition that the impending proletarian revolution would differ fundamentally from the revolutions of the past, which had been bourgeois in content. One of the cardinal features of the latter revolutions, he pointed out, was that they all ultimately benefited a minority. The Commune had demonstrated that the proletarian revolution, aimed at a radical restructuring of society in the interests of the masses, of all working people, could count on success only if these masses, primarily the proletariat, acted consciously. Moreover, the lessons of the Commune were evidence that the objective conditions for the triumph of the working class had not matured, that it would take time to prepare these conditions. Although "after the victory power fell, quite of itself and quite undisputed, into the hands of the working class", it was found once again, as in 1848, "how impossible even then ... this rule of the working class still was".³ The socialist parties had to go on with their work patiently and perseveringly in order to enable the proletariat not only to triumph but also to benefit by the fruits of its triumph when historical development gave rise to a favourable situation. This was the only

¹ Ibid.

² Engels to Florence Kelley-Wischnewetzky, January 27, 1887, *ibid.*, p. 378.

³ Introduction by Frederick Engels to *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* by Karl Marx, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, p. 193.

way to awaken the class consciousness of the worker masses and enlist the support of non-proletarian sections of the working people.

In this context Engels attached great importance to the utmost use of legal methods and forms of struggle: work in trade unions and other mass organisations of the working people, agitation and propaganda, the socialist press, participation in election campaigns, and the parliamentary activity of workers' deputies. The fundamental distinction in how revolutionary Socialists used parliament, Engels stressed, was that while the opportunists sought to make this the central and even sole form of activity, the former had to subordinate their work in parliament to the fulfilment of the general tasks of the working-class movement, the attainment of the movement's end goals.

Engels regarded the work of revolutionary Socialists in parliament chiefly as a powerful means of spreading the party's basic ideas and, consequently, the ideas of scientific socialism. Election campaigns and the parliamentary rostrum provided unprecedented opportunities for mass political agitation not only among workers but also among non-proletarian sections of the working people, while the results of elections helped the party by showing what influence it had in the nation as a whole and in individual regions, and identifying weak points in its agitational work. Lastly, the existence of a more or less compact group of Socialist deputies in a representative institution—national parliament or local or municipal elected body—made it possible to fight for specific demands aimed at improving the condition of the working people: the introduction of social legislation, the extension of political rights, and so forth. Engels insisted that Socialist deputies should move their own bills in the interests of workers and the working people as a whole; he regarded this as an important element of their work in parliament. In cases where opposition bourgeois parties moved proposals that to some extent met the demands of the masses and social progress (for instance, secular education in schools, an extension of suffrage, and so on), Socialist deputies could support these proposals.

As Engels saw it, one of the main conditions for the parliamentary activity of socialist parties was that the Socialist deputies should be entirely independent, organisationally and politically, from other factions in parliament or local bodies of power. Without rejecting the need for individual temporary agreements on this or that issue with representatives of other opposition parties, he said that this condition was mandatory. In determining what attitude to adopt to a motion by such parties or, particularly, to a motion by the government, the Socialist deputies should always proceed from the interests of the working class, abide by the class line, and avoid succumbing to subterfuges.

In his introduction to Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* Engels re-examined the problem of the relationship between peaceful and non-peaceful means of struggle for society's revolutionary transformation. He re-emphasised a point that he and Marx had made time and again: under particularly favourable conditions, if the bourgeoisie proved unable to oppose the proletariat by force at the decisive moment, society's revolutionary transformation could be accomplished by relatively peaceful means, but circumstances could at any time require the most determined actions by the proletariat.¹ In other words, the spectrum of means at the disposal of the revolutionary proletariat and its party had to be wide enough to enable it to use those that were the most expedient or even the only ones possible at the given time.

The question of bringing the proletariat the support of the other sections of the working people, notably the peasants, acquired special urgency for the European Socialists in the 1880s and even more so in the 1890s. But in the socialist parties there was no clarity on this issue as was seen, in particular, in the draft agrarian programme of the French Workers' Party. An attempt to profit by this vagueness was instantly made by the opportunists, for instance, Georg Vollmar. The necessary lucidity was introduced by Engels in his letters, and, especially, in *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, in which he charted a Marxist agrarian programme and showed what strategy and tactics were to be employed by the revolutionary Socialists relative to the peasants. Under capitalism, he wrote, the peasants should not be seen as a homogeneous social stratum. There was continuous differentiation and the attitude of the socialist parties had to be different to the different groups of peasants: rich, middle, and poor.

The rich peasants, he wrote, could be allies of the Socialists only within a limited framework, on certain questions,² to the extent they fought against feudal landownership. The situation was different in the case of the small peasants, and also of the middle peasants who did not exploit wage labour; as proprietors or tenants they were doomed to ruin under capitalism. It was therefore the party's task to win the support chiefly of the small peasants. Of course, the Socialists had to defend them against arbitrary rule and robbery, but it

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, p. 201. In 1886 Engels noted in his preface to the English edition of the first volume of *Capital* that Marx believed that in England the "social revolution might be effected entirely by peaceful and legal means"; but he "never forgot to add that he hardly expected the English ruling classes to submit, without a 'pro-slavery rebellion', to this peaceful and legal revolution".

² Frederick Engels, "The Peasant Question in France and Germany", *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 466.

was impossible to achieve any radical improvement of their condition as long as the capitalist mode of production prevailed. Winning the small peasants to the side of the working class meant explaining that solely the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist system could save them from poverty and ruin. Engels wrote that "it is the duty of our Party to make clear to the peasants again and again that their position is absolutely hopeless as long as capitalism holds sway, that it is absolutely impossible to preserve their small holdings for them as such, that capitalist large-scale production is absolutely sure to run over their impotent antiquated system of small production as a train runs over a pushcart".¹

He substantiated in detail the agrarian policy to be pursued by the working class after it won political power, its tactics relative to the different groups of the peasants. The paramount task was to make it clear to the peasant that his true interest was in turning his land holding into cooperative property. This transition had to be gradual, "not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose"²; "we shall do everything at all permissible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the co-operative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him... to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision".³ The rich and middle peasants employing wage labour could be gradually brought to large-scale socialist production by "the pooling of farms to form co-operative enterprises, in which the exploitation of wage labour will be eliminated more and more, and their gradual transformation into branches of the great national producers' co-operative with each branch enjoying equal rights and duties can be instituted".⁴ If, however, they did not take that road voluntarily "we shall have to abandon them to their fate and address ourselves to their wage-workers, among whom we shall not fail to find sympathy".⁵

In his last works, including his uncompleted supplements to the third volume of *Capital*, Engels noted some crucial new phenomena in the economy of capitalist society (the formation of monopolies, the growing role of the stock exchange, the expanding export of capital, and so on).⁶ Lenin wrote that Engels' observations showed "how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the various changes

¹ Ibid., p. 472.

² Ibid., p. 470.

³ Ibid., p. 471.

⁴ Ibid., p. 474.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Engels' contribution to the development of Marxist political economy is discussed in A. I. Malysh, *Frederick Engels and Proletarian Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970; L. A. Leontyev, *Engels and the Economic Doctrine of Marxism*, Moscow, 1965 (both in Russian).

occurring in modern capitalism, and how for this reason he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our present, the imperialist, epoch".¹ Engels saw these changes as evidence that the objective material conditions of socialism were maturing.

In developing Marx's teaching, Engels constantly emphasised its creative character. He repeatedly made it plain that Marxism was not a dogma, but a guide to action, and called upon his comrades-in-arms and pupils to learn to use this theoretical weapon under different circumstances, to use it in accordance with the obtaining historical conditions, with the changes taking place in society.

Marxist theory was amplified not only in the works of its founders; a large contribution was made by their pupils and followers in Germany and other countries. While popularising the component parts and aspects of Marxism and defending it against its detractors and falsifiers, the associates of Marx and Engels elaborated and deepened individual aspects of scientific socialism, of Marxist philosophy and political economy, and successfully applied the Marxist method to studies of problems of history. Key questions of the theory and tactics of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation were developed in polemical and other articles, pamphlets, and books by leading personalities of the Marxist wing of the working-class movement.

August Bebel, in particular, did much in this respect. As early as the 1870s he published a series of works in which he analysed the class essence of the bourgeois state generally and of the Prussian-German Empire in particular. He revealed the class motivations of Prussian militarism, which was "the product of the prevailing state and social system",² of the colonial policies pursued by the German Empire. Regarding the colonial adventures of Bismarck, Bebel wrote: "The Social-Democrats are opposed to the present colonial policy in its entirety, for they see it solely as a striving to expand the sphere of capitalist exploitation."³

Bebel was one of the first to undertake to examine the question of the attitude of socialist parties to religion. In a series of polemical articles and pamphlets—the most important of which was *Christianity and Socialism*—he amplified Marx's propositions on the subject, showing the social roots of religion, giving a materialist view of the origin of Christianity, and noting the link of religious ideology to the interests of the ruling classes. In an outline history of the Peasant War in Germany, he drew upon the works of Marx and En-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 442.

² *Die Sozialdemokratie im Deutschen Reichstag. Tätigkeitsberichte und Wahlauf-rufe aus den Jahren 1871 bis 1893*, Verlag Buchhandlung Vorwärts, Berlin, 1909, S. 249.

³ *Der Sozialdemokrat*, October 22, 1885.

gels, writing: "May the workers and peasants ... extend their hands to each other in the most noble and greatest of liberation struggles ever seen in the world."¹

Bebel's greatest contribution was his substantiation of the proletarian party's revolutionary tactics, chiefly in parliament, under conditions witnessing capitalism's relatively peaceful development. Contrary to the reformists, he demonstrated that the purpose of the struggle for immediate demands aimed at improving the economic condition of the working people and extending their political rights was chiefly to create the conditions for the attainment of the central goal—winning of political power by the proletariat and the socialisation of the means of production. At the Erfurt Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party in 1891 he said: "We should always have a complete picture before our eyes, and for us the only significance and aim of any new concession is that it enables us to firm up the soil of struggle on which we stand."²

Lenin wrote highly of Bebel's contribution to the theoretical elaboration of the tactical principles of the socialist working-class movement. He noted: "The fundamentals of parliamentary tactics for German (and international) Social-Democracy, tactics that never yield an inch to the enemy, never miss the slightest opportunity to achieve even small improvements for the workers and are at the same time implacable on questions of principle and always directed to the accomplishment of the final aim—the fundamentals of these tactics were elaborated by Bebel himself or under his direct leadership and with his participation."³

Some aspects of the Marxist doctrine were productively developed by Wilhelm Liebknecht. Along with Bebel he substantiated the principles of Socialists' parliamentary tactics that could be modified in accordance with the evolution of specific conditions while preserving basic revolutionary positions. In polemical articles directed against the party's reformist wing and the Katheder-Socialists he exploded the legend about "state socialism", which was intrinsically hostile to genuine socialism. He, too, was among the first to examine the agrarian question. In a pamphlet entitled *The Agrarian Question*

¹ A. Bebel, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*, Druck und Verlag von W. Bracke jr., Braunschweig, 1876, S. 230.

² *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten zu Erfurt vom 14. bis 20. Oktober 1891*, Verlag der Expedition des Vorwärts Berliner Volksblatt, Berlin, 1891, S. 174.

³ V. I. Lenin, "August Bebel", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 298. Bebel's contribution to the development of Marxism is considered in N. Ovcharenko, *August Bebel*, Moscow, 1963 (in Russian); *August Bebel. Eine Biographie*, Berlin, 1963; *Zur Geschichte der marxistisch-leninistischen Philosophie in Deutschland*, Bd. 1, 2. Hbbd., S. 112-22.

he based himself on general propositions of Marxism and showed that the working peasants had a stake in the establishment of socialism.

Questions of Marxist philosophy, of dialectical and historical materialism, were examined at length in the 1880s-1890s in the works of Paul Lafargue, Josef Dietzgen, G. V. Plekhanov, Antonio Labriola, Franz Mehring, and other prominent figures of the international working-class movement. In *Economic Materialism in the Interpretation of History*, Lafargue, then coming forward as a populariser of Marxism, dealt substantively with and amplified some aspects of dialectical and historical materialism. In particular, he researched the substance and operation of the bourgeois state machine and the class character of bourgeois democracy. Of the pupils and associates of Marx and Engels, Lafargue was among those who as early as the end of the 1870s theoretically substantiated the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, pointing out that this was the form in which the working class would exercise state power after the revolution.¹ He successfully applied the method of historical materialism to his studies of the origin of property, the history of primitive and antique society, the history of religion, and other questions.²

Various aspects of Marxist philosophy are dealt with in the principal works of Josef Dietzgen, who upheld dialectical materialism against its bourgeois detractors and gave a more profound interpretation of some philosophical problems, chiefly the theory of cognition.³

An outstanding role in developing Marxist philosophy was played at the time by G. V. Plekhanov.⁴ In his very first Marxist works, which were directed against the Narodnik movement, he showed the theoretical untenability of Narodnik utopian socialism, traced its ideological link to the petty-bourgeois socialist currents in the West, and amplified some of Marx's and Engels' ideas, in particular, about the class substance of the bourgeois state and its fundamental distinction from the proletarian state. The role of the latter was characterised by Plekhanov as "consciously to organise all functions of social and economic life".⁵ His works, such as *For the Sixtieth Anniversary of Hegel's Death*, *The Development of the Monist View of History* which, Lenin wrote, had "helped to rear a whole generation of Russian Marxists",⁶ and *Essays on the History of Materialism*—were a significant contribution to the defence of dialectical and historical materialism and to the development of Marxist philo-

¹ "Le Parti ouvrier et l'état capitaliste", *L'Égalité*, No. 30, August 11, 1880.

² H. N. Momdjan, *Lafargue and Some Questions of Marxist Theory*, Yerevan, 1954 (in Russian).

³ V. V. Volkova, *Josef Dietzgen*, Moscow, 1961 (in Russian).

⁴ See also Chapter 7.

⁵ Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works* in five volumes, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 96.

⁶ V. I. Lenin, "The Vperyod Faction", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 269.

sophical thought. He analysed the substance of the revolution in philosophy accomplished by the founders of Marxism, showing the fundamental distinction between dialectical materialism and preceding materialist doctrines, and the significance of Marxist philosophy as the theoretical foundation of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation. He was one of the first to research the role of the masses as the driving force of historical development. Lenin wrote that "you *cannot* hope to become a *real*, intelligent Communist without making a study—and I mean *study*—of all of Plekhanov's philosophical writings, because nothing better has been written on Marxism anywhere in the world".¹

A large contribution to the development of Marxist theory in those years was also made by Karl Kautsky, who was powerfully influenced by Engels. In many articles and pamphlets he upheld and developed some propositions of Marxist theory, refuting the arguments of its detractors. One of his major works was *The Erfurt Programme*, in which he presented a detailed characteristic of Marxism's importance to the working-class movement. His historical works, especially on medieval social movements and on the history of socialist thought, were an important milestone in the development of Marxist historical science.

Much was also done by Franz Mehring, who was the first to review the main stages of Germany's history from the angle of materialism. These works, and philosophical writings giving a materialist interpretation of history, placed Mehring in the front ranks of Marxist theorists. In the early 1890s he began to write for *Neue Zeit*, contributing a weekly column in which he gave a Marxist interpretation of current political events.²

In the 1890s some compelling works were published by the Italian Socialist Antonio Labriola, most of whose writings were devoted to questions of historical materialism. He made a searching Marxist criticism of positivism, neo-Kantianism, and some petty-bourgeois socialist currents and attempts at vulgarising Marxism. Moreover, he showed that there was a need for a proletarian party in Italy.

Some advances were made in those years in the development of Marxist political economy as well. Paul Lafargue noted in his works some new phenomena in the economy of capitalism, in particular the fusion of bank and industrial capital, and also the tendency towards

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 94.

² This subject is dealt with in Josef Schleifstein, *Franz Mehring. Sein marxistisches Schaffen*, Rütten & Loening, Berlin, 1959; S. V. Obolenskaya, *Franz Mehring as a Historian*, Moscow, 1966 (in Russian).

the growth of monopolies (citing the American trusts as an example). At the close of the nineteenth century these phenomena were studied by the young Socialist Rosa Luxemburg, who in *Social Reform or Revolution* and other works attempted to formulate a Marxist view of the new processes in the economy and policies of capitalism.

The works of the above-mentioned followers of Marx and Engels contained many important views and observations, but their understanding of some questions was not clearly enough defined.¹

A fundamentally new stage in the further development of Marxist theory was ushered by Lenin, who evolved a teaching that in the new epoch, which commenced at the turn of the century, has become the compass for the militant proletariat.

A NEW STAGE OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN REVOLUTIONARY AND OPPORTUNIST IDEOLOGY

By the 1890s scientific communism had prevailed over pre-Marxian socialist currents in most countries. "Marxism," Lenin wrote, "had ousted all the more or less integral doctrines hostile to it."² However, this did not imply that the ideological struggle in the working-class movement was ebbing.

Large contingents of the organised working class, chiefly in Britain and the USA, where the trade unions were generally reformist organisations and no significant socialist parties had emerged, remained outside the influence of Marxist and socialist thought in general. Many workers were still unorganised. Their class-consciousness level remained low although to some extent they too came under the influence of the proletarian vanguard.

The influx of large numbers of workers into the socialism-oriented organised working-class movement, a highly positive phenomenon as such, allowed non-proletarian views to infiltrate that movement. Throughout the period we are considering the spread of opportunism was facilitated by the increasing differentiation in the working class, an expression of which was the visible disparity between the living standards and way of life of the proletarian mass and the relatively small privileged stratum, the labour aristocracy.

But even in countries where large workers' parties functioned and, in the main, adhered to Marxist positions, far from all aspects of the Marxist doctrine were equally assimilated by the embattled proletarian masses. Moreover, there was a distance between recognition of the propositions of scientific socialism as recorded in the programme documents of socialist parties and concretised in slogans

¹ *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1959, chapters 5, 7, 8 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 32.

and in the speeches of the movement's leaders, and the actual understanding of Marx's teaching and, most importantly, the ability to adapt this teaching to the conditions and features of each country.

In many cases verbal agreement with Marxism was combined oddly with adherence to individual aspects of refuted petty-bourgeois socialist doctrines—Lassalleanism, Proudhonism, Bakuninism. In some instances, the historical perspective was lost in the practical day-to-day struggle, and this blunted attention to the task of fundamentally restructuring society. The initial successes in using the existing political mechanisms were absolutised, and this led to a tendency to exaggerate the possibilities of the working class in capitalist society. Also, a superficial, mostly book, knowledge of Marxism generated an inclination to simplify, schematise, and emasculate its creative spirit.

The ideological differences in the working-class movement covered a wide sphere. "The forms and causes of the struggle changed," Lenin wrote, "but the struggle continued."¹ In economic theory it was waged against the attempts to distort Marx's doctrine by stripping it of its revolutionary substance; in philosophy it was waged against vulgarisations of dialectical and historical materialism. But the sharpest clashes were over Marx's teaching on the proletarian revolution, the political power of the proletariat, and communist society.

The aim of winning political power by the proletariat, set by the new-fledged socialist parties, required an answer to the questions of how this aim was to be achieved and what form would be taken by the political power of the working class. With this was closely linked the problem of the proletariat's allies in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. The task was to establish a proper correlation between the struggle for immediate aims, achievable in capitalist society, and the struggle for the total abolition of the capitalist system. Lastly, as international links widened and, in particular, with the formation of a new international proletarian association growing significance was acquired by the problem of the relationship between national and international aims.

All these theoretical questions were very closely linked to the practice of the working-class movement. They were inevitably brought up at congresses and conventions and when programme documents were drawn up, and were repeatedly discussed, with great passion and sharpness, in the socialist press. As a rule, the various approaches to these questions reflected fundamental divergences.

Reformism, with the still surviving Lassalleanism as one of its ideological mainsprings, began to spread in the German Social-Democratic movement as early as the 1880s. In the period the Anti-

¹ Ibid.

Socialist Law was in operation, a group championing the idea of "state socialism" and, in effect, supporting Bismarck's social policies was formed in the party leadership. It consisted mainly of deputies of the Reichstag. The newspapers *Berliner Volksblatt* and *Recht auf Arbeit*, and the journal *Neue Welt* articulated the views of this group, whose members included the journalist Wilhelm Blos, the former Chairman of the Lassallean General Association of German Workers Wilhelm Hasenclever, and the journalists Bruno Geiser and Louis Viereck.

Revolutionary leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party used *Sozialdemokrat* and *Neue Zeit*, sittings of the parliamentary faction, and party congresses to denounce this group, which drew some of its arguments from the writings of the so-called Katheder-Socialists. The party had the assistance and support of Engels, whose theoretical works provided its revolutionary leaders with scientific arguments against the opportunists.

Following the repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law opportunist views became more widespread in the German Social-Democratic movement. Whereas formerly their proponents were mainly ex-Lassalleans, who had never regarded themselves as Marxists, reformist views were now preached by people who had not long before championed revolutionary and even ultra-radical views. One of them was Georg Vollmar, the first editor of the party's underground newspaper *Sozialdemokrat* and from the close of the 1880s a leader of the Social-Democratic organisation of Bavaria. In the 1890s he championed an avowedly reformist platform. Bismarck's fall, Vollmar contended, had put an end to resistance to reforms; the party therefore had to concentrate on implementing a "positive programme of action" that allegedly would lead to society's gradual transformation along socialist lines. The fact that in this context he pinned special hopes on the "liberalism" of Wilhelm II brought these views close to those of the proponents of "state socialism" of the Bismarck brand. Vollmar, Engels noted, "wants to force his state-socialist ravings on the party".¹ One of the points in the "positive programme" spoke of the "neutrality" of the state in the conflicts between labour and capital. This was a direct consequence of incomprehension of the class nature of the bourgeois state. Vollmar's preachings were condemned by the party's revolutionary leaders,² but found support among elements who had long been opportunists.

¹ Engels an August Bebel, 23. Juli 1892, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 38, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, S. 407.

² At the Erfurt Congress Vollmar drew the heaviest criticism from Bebel. "His tactics," Bebel said, "would have gradually brought us to a point where having concentrated exclusively on agitation for immediate aims we would have forgotten that we are a Social-Democratic party and would have forgotten

In France the Possibilists lost much of their influence in the 1890s. However, the reformist elements in the French socialist movement even gained strength, especially after they were joined by so-called independent Socialists headed by Alexandre Millerand.

In Britain a reformist line was pursued most perseveringly by the Fabian Society. Although it was numerically small and had no serious support from the working people, it was a notable factor of the ideological struggle in the socialist movement. The Fabians, the most prominent of whom were Sidney and Beatrice Webb, James Ramsay MacDonald, and George Bernard Shaw, were emphatically opposed to revolutionary methods. They held that socialism could be achieved gradually by reforms enforced by municipal councils and then by parliament. They saw the road to this in "saturating" the bourgeois Liberal Party with socialist ideas. In one form or another reformist slogans and ideas had a large following in socialist parties and organisations of other countries.

As a rule, the Marxist line prevailed in the resolutions of the congresses of the largest parties. However, no congress and no sizable campaign passed without right-opportunist elements stating their own viewpoint and getting some support.

Also, there were relapses into anarchism. In Germany these were linked to the activities of Johann Most and Wilhelm Hasselmann, who were opposed to any legal work and demanded the organisation of terrorist acts. The newspaper *Freiheit*, published by them in London, called for an immediate revolution. At the Wieden Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in 1880 both were expelled from the party.

In that period the anarchists had a temporary following among worker Socialists in Austria. There were senseless acts of terrorism. But it was only in the latter half of the 1880s that many militants of the movement saw the harm of anarchist practices and returned to Marxist positions.

In Britain anarchist elements took over the leadership of the Socialist League, with the result that it lost all contact with the worker masses and had ceased to exist by the mid-1890s. In France the 1890s saw the anarchists winning strong positions in the trade unions. As we have already noted, anarchist views prevailed for some time in the working-class movement of the Netherlands.

In Germany there was a vocal semi-anarchist group of "the Young" in the early 1890s. While criticising the opportunists, they argued that there was no need for Social-Democrats to be members of par-

that the present state and society are the mortal enemies of Social-Democracy, and that there can be no alliance with them" (*Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten zu Erfurt vom 14. bis 20. Oktober 1891, Berlin, 1891, S. 274*).

liament and other legal organisations, demagogically charged the party leadership with having renounced the revolutionary struggle, and tried to impose sectarian, conspiratorial tactics on the party. For a short period this group had the support of individual party branches in Berlin, Dresden, Magdeburg, and some other cities. It was only thanks to Engels' assistance and the resolute actions of Bebel and other revolutionary leaders of the party that the "student rebellion", as it was called by Engels, was put down.¹

In those years, when the principal task of the movement was to prepare gradually for future revolutionary battles, muster its forces, and organise the proletariat, the anarchist slogans sowed confusion and often seriously prejudiced the movement. Terrorist acts, such as were perpetrated in Austria in the 1880s or France in the 1890s, played into the hands of extreme reaction, giving it the pretext for attacking workers' organisations and the movement as a whole.

In view of the enhanced importance of parliamentary activity there were frequent clashes and arguments over problems linked to the line of action to be followed by the socialist parties in legislative bodies, particularly over the question of the permissibility and limits of agreements with bourgeois parties. Any ill-advised approach to these problems could seriously harm the working-class movement. This was demonstrated convincingly by the case where in 1885 Henry Hyndman, leader of the British Social-Democratic Federation, arranged with the leadership of the Conservative Party for funds for the Federation's election campaign. In return the Federation was to stand candidates in some constituencies solely to divert votes from the Liberals. This action was strongly condemned by other socialist organisations and even in the Federation itself. Engels wrote at the time that because of Hyndman the Socialists suffered "irreparable moral damage in the opinion of the only *class* that could replenish their ranks—the broad mass of radical workers".²

Differences over the question of what attitude to take to bills being debated in parliaments were frequently the cause of sharp disputes and collisions in the parties. In such cases the unity of socialist factions was jeopardised by the unprincipled stand of the opportunists.

In the mid-1880s the disagreements in the Social-Democratic faction in the German Reichstag in connection with the debate of a government bill on state subsidies to shipping companies all but led to a split in the party. The opportunist wing supported this

¹ N. E. Ovcharenko, *In the Struggle for Revolutionary Marxism*, Moscow, 1966, chapters 3 and 4 (in Russian).

² Engels an Eduard Bernstein, 7. Dezember 1885, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 403.

colonialist bill designed to sustain the overseas expansion of the German Empire. The revolutionary segment of the faction headed by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht firmly adopted a negative attitude to the bill. The Bebel-Liebknecht posture was strongly backed by Engels, the editorial staff of *Sozialdemokrat* and the vast majority of party branches. The opportunists had no alternative to backing down. But this was a serious danger signal.¹

Even more menacing events unfolded in the party in the summer of 1894. For the first time in the history of the SDPG's participation in parliament its faction in the Bavarian Landtag voted for endorsement of the budget proposed by the government. This was in direct contravention of tradition, but the faction's action was sanctioned by a congress of the Bavarian Social-Democratic Party, which was headed by Vollmar. Some of the party's organisations and its leaders—August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and Paul Singer—protested. The action of the Bavarians was also denounced by the SDPG Congress in Frankfurt in the autumn of the same year. However, no measures were taken against the opportunists.

The question of the proletariat's allies was a major bone of contention in intra-party debates. The significance of work among non-proletarian strata of the working people was underrated in the Social-Democratic parties. Their approach to this question was to some extent still influenced by the Lassalleian thesis that non-proletarian social groups were a "one reactionary mass". Many leading personalities of the working-class movement rejected the contention that the socialist parties had to have a special agrarian programme, believing that the general laws of capitalism operated similarly in town and countryside. Ill-considered, essentially opportunist views were advanced when attempts were made to draw up such a programme. Some people did not see that it was necessary to draw the working rural population into the struggle against the capitalist system, and others were inclined to favour an alliance with the rural bourgeoisie.

The question of the SDPG's agrarian programme was specially debated at the Frankfurt Congress in October 1894. Georg Vollmar and Bruno Schoenlank, who delivered the reports, argued that for the sake of votes the party should champion the interests even of those peasants who exploited farm labourers. The reports and the resolution approved by the Congress (over the objections of the consistent Marxists) underestimated the inevitable erosion of small peasant property as a result of capitalist development. The Congress

¹ Heinz Wolter, *Alternative zu Bismarck. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und die Aussenpolitik des preussisch-deutschen Reiches 1878 bis 1890*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1970, S. 121-25; E. Engelberg, *Revolutionäre Politik und rote Feldpost*, Berlin, 1959, S. 95-100.

did not adopt an agrarian programme, confining itself to setting up a programme commission.¹

Analogous errors were to be seen in the agrarian programme adopted by the French Workers' Party at the Marseilles Congress in 1892 and supplemented at the Nantes Congress in 1894. Alongside correct Marxist provisions, this document contained provisions reflecting the interests of rich peasants. Opportunist propositions, which were close to Vollmar's views, had been championed by Jean Jaurès shortly before the Congress.²

The strengthening and broadening of international links and, in particular, the formation of a new international association confronted the socialist parties with the problems of coordinating the actions of national parties, organising joint international actions, and so on. In those years problems of this kind were, on the whole, resolved correctly, in the interests of international socialism, although there were difficulties and errors. There was some nationalistic preaching that called for running a dividing line between national interests and the aims of the international socialist movement. But almost always it was vigorously rebuffed.

Sectarian errors were a serious obstacle to individual socialist parties becoming genuinely mass organisations. The sectarianism of the close of the nineteenth century consisted in failing to take proper account of the actual level of the working-class movement, of the need for gradually, in the course of the practical struggle, chiefly of the economic battles, to give the worker masses a true understanding of their class interests, a socialist consciousness. The founders of Marxism noted the direct link between the sectarian line and a dogmatic interpretation of Marxism as the sum of axiomatic propositions, an inability to apply revolutionary theory under diverse circumstances, under different conditions. Engels wrote in 1891 that "the people who, more or less, have the correct theory *as to the dogmatic side of it*, become a mere sect because they cannot conceive that living theory of action, of working with the working class at every possible stage of its development, otherwise than as a collection of dogmas to be learnt by heart and recited like a conjuror's formula or a Catholic prayer".³

Sectarianism was most conspicuous in the British Social-Democratic Federation and the Socialist Labor Party of the USA. The above words by Engels applied directly to the leaders of the latter. The Social-Democratic Federation, which Engels described as having

¹ H. Hesselbarth, *Revolutionäre Sozialdemokraten, Opportunisten und Bauern am Vorabend des Imperialismus*, Berlin, 1969.

² *A History of the Second International*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1965, pp. 172-74 (in Russian).

³ *Labour Monthly*, September 1955, p. 418.

a "Marxist programme but exclusively sectarian tactics",¹ took a stand against work in the trade unions on the grounds that the latter's leaders were propounding anti-socialist views. As a result, the Federation deprived itself of the possibility of ideologically influencing the mass of organised workers. A similar stand was taken by the Socialist Labor Party of the USA, whose negative attitude to the reformist policies of the AF of L leaders in the 1890s was projected to the workers affiliated to it.

Sectarian errors were made also by some other parties. As we have already noted, during the political crisis generated in France by the nationalist agitation conducted by General Georges Boulanger, upon whom reactionary monarchist circles looked as their champion, the leaders of the French Workers' Party proclaimed their neutrality, believing that the proletariat should hold aloof from the infighting in the bourgeois camp despite the fact that the Boulangist movement threatened republican institutions vital to the working class. The party's leaders reversed their stand only under the impact of developments and the criticism from Engels.

MARXISM VERSUS REVISIONISM

The ideological struggle in the international working-class movement was sharply intensified in the latter half of the 1890s, when Eduard Bernstein, one of the leading personalities in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, wrote articles criticising and revising Marxist theory from reformist positions.² These articles in fact heralded a trend in the international working-class movement which has become known as revisionism and which exists to this day in one form or another.

Bernstein's first articles appeared under the general heading *Problems of Socialism* in *Neue Zeit*, the theoretical journal of the SDPG, in 1896, and the subsequent ones in early 1898. In these articles Bernstein contended that the socialist revolution was neither necessary nor even desirable, maintaining that new phenomena in capitalism's development were opening up the possibility of "partially implementing socialism" in bourgeois society. He formulated the substance of his views (and of revisionism in general) as follows: "I say bluntly that I see very little sense in what is usually implied

¹ Engels an Filippo Turati, 16. August 1894, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, S. 289.

² The struggle against revisionism in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany at the close of the nineteenth century is discussed in N. E. Ovcharenko, *German Social-Democracy at the Turn of the Century*, Moscow, 1975; B. A. Aizin, "The Struggle Against Revisionism in the German Social-Democratic Movement at the Close of the 19th Century (1898-1899)", *The Modern German Working-Class Movement*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 166-234 (both in Russian).

sa the 'ultimate goal of socialism'. Whatever it is, for me this goal is nothing, the movement is everything."¹

Bernstein enunciated his anti-Marxist concepts in detail in the book *Prerequisites of Socialism and the Tasks of Social-Democracy* published in February 1899. On the claim that Marxist theory had not stood the test of time, he attacked dialectical materialism, attempting to prove that the materialist interpretation of history was "contradictory" and "untenable".² In the wake of bourgeois critics of *Capital* he declared that Marx's theory of surplus value could not explain the substance of capitalist exploitation of labour, that the Marxist proposition on the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few capitalists and the proletarianisation of growing numbers of people was not being borne out by social development. He rejected the Marxist theory of crises, asserting that general economic crises were no longer possible as a result of the creation of a capitalist world market, the rapid expansion of transport and communication, the elasticity of the credit system, and the growth of joint-stock companies, cartels, and other capitalist corporations.

The enormous danger of the undisguised revision of Marxism started by Bernstein was, among other things, that it gave specious answers to the questions that the onward course of history was posing the international working-class movement. The new phenomena in capitalism's development, particularly the formation of joint-stock companies, cartels, trusts, and so on, had been analysed by Marxists, notably by Engels, who convincingly showed that they bore out Marx's theory of the concentration of production and were leading to the further maturing of the material conditions of socialism. Bernstein, on the contrary, saw these new phenomena as a convincing indication that capitalism was surmounting anarchy of production and economic crises and believed that the certain increase in the wages and improvement of the working conditions of individual contingents of the proletariat were evidence that class contradictions were being gradually extinguished in bourgeois society. Hence his key conclusion that it was impossible to substantiate socialism scientifically. In his reading socialism had become an ethical category embodying abstract ideas of "justice", "equality", "humanitarianism", and so on.

His theoretical "quests" were supposed to reinforce his action programme, the main point of which was that Social-Democracy should renounce revolutionary aims, abandon the idea of winning political power by the working class for the implementation of fundamental social reforms. He believed that Social-Democracy should

¹ *Die Neue Zeit*, Vol. 1, No. 18, 1897-98, p. 556.

² Ed. Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, Verlag von J. H. W. Dietz, Stuttgart, 1899, S. 36.

become a "democratic-socialist party of reform".¹ While rejecting the Marxist teaching that the state was an instrument of class domination, he attributed a supraclass character to bourgeois democracy, regarding it as expressing the interests of society as a whole.

In his arguments that revolution was "unnecessary" and that society could be transformed by individual social reforms, he artificially counterposed reforms to revolution and asserted that revolutionary Marxism denied that the working class was interested in reforms within the framework of capitalism. He declared that the way to socialism lay solely through the trade unions, that were gradually securing an improvement of the condition of the working class, and also through producer and consumer cooperative societies, which, as they became more and more widespread, would be the pillar of the future socialist system.

His most vicious attack was directed at Marx's teaching on the dictatorship of the proletariat. He declared that the working class was totally unprepared for the winning and exercise of political power, arguing that the heterogeneity of the proletariat ruled out a single class consciousness, a single class stand.

Bernstein's "criticism" of Marxism differed little from that of the detractors of Marxism in the bourgeois camp. But the latter laid no claim, as was done by Bernstein, to "improving" and "developing" Marxism. Bernstein, who was regarded as a supporter of Marx's teaching, came forward under the guise of "adjusting" Marxism to the new economic and political factors, to which it allegedly no longer conformed. Actually, his purpose was to turn the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party into a party collaborating with the bourgeoisie. This was what motivated Lenin to write the following about Bernstein's book several years later in *What Is to Be Done?*: "Denied was the possibility of putting socialism on a scientific basis and of demonstrating its necessity and inevitability from the point of view of the materialist conception of history. Denied was the fact of growing impoverishment, the process of proletarianisation, and the intensification of capitalist contradictions; the very concept, 'ultimate aim', was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completely rejected.... Denied was *the theory of the class struggle*, on the alleged grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society governed according to the will of the majority, etc."²

Bernstein's views were lauded by opportunist elements in the working-class movement of a number of countries. In Germany Bernstein was backed by some prominent personalities in the SDPG,

¹ Ibid., S. 165.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 353.

including Georg Vollmar, who was known for his opportunist views, Eduard David, who specialised in distorting the Marxist teaching on the agrarian question, and Wolfgang Heine and Max Schippel, who wanted the party to reconsider its anti-militarist programme. Ignaz Auer, one of the party's leaders, contended that Bernstein had every "right" to "criticise" Marxism. Bernstein thus became the standard-bearer of all the opportunist elements in the party, elements who comprised a numerically small but influential group with the journal *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (whose publication was started in 1897) as their mouthpiece. These people not only joined in Bernstein's attempts to revise Marxism but also amplified his revisionist ideas in the press.

In France Bernstein's views were embraced by former Possibilists and "independent Socialists", who shortly before had belonged to the bourgeois radical party. The "independent Socialist" Alexandre Millerand was the first to draw a practical conclusion from Bernsteinian revisionism: in July 1899, without the knowledge of the parliamentary Socialist group he joined the French Government, in which the post of War Minister was held by General Gaston Gallifet, the butcher of the Paris Commune. Known as the "Millerand case", this evoked the indignation of most Socialists in France and other countries. It laid the beginning for ministerialism, an extreme right-wing trend in the French socialist movement. In Russia views analogous to those propounded by Bernstein were articulated by the Economists, who held that the sole aim of the working-class movement should be the implementation of measures to improve the economic condition of the working people.¹ In Britain Bernstein's views were paralleled by the theories of the Fabians that provided one of the ideological mainstays of revisionism (true, unlike Bernstein, they did not pose as followers of Marx).

In some other countries individual socialist leaders came under the influence of revisionism. In Hungary the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party formally rejected Bernsteinism but in fact was in solidarity with some revisionist propositions and publicly approved Millerand's behaviour. There were supporters of Bernstein among the Czech Socialists as well. In Italy Bernstein's views were shared by the former anarchist Merlino and some other leading members of the Socialist Party. Filippo Turati, Ivanoe Bonomi, and others were to some extent influenced by these views. Leaders of the Belgian Labour Party, particularly E. Anseele, were inclined to accept them. In Sweden Bernstein's ideas were preached by Karl Hjalmar Branting.

Consequently, as Lenin noted at the time, revisionism became an

¹ See Chapter 10.

international phenomenon as soon as it emerged. And the struggle against it, although initially conducted mainly in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, acquired an international character.

The first sharp rebuffs received by Bernstein came from the Polish Socialist Rosa Luxemburg, who shortly before had moved to Germany, and from Franz Mehring, a leading German theorist of revolutionary Marxism.

Bernstein was subjected to withering criticism at the October 1898 Stuttgart Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, at which, along with Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and some others, revisionist views were condemned by Karl Kautsky, a long-time friend of Bernstein's and, at the time, a recognised authority on Marxism. Although he made many reservations, Kautsky was very critical of Bernstein's articles (the Congress was held before the publication of Bernstein's book). However, at the Congress there also were some voices in support of Bernstein; the most overtly revisionist speech was made by Conrad Schmidt, a young economist. The mood of rank-and-file Socialists was mirrored by the meetings of many local party branches held after the Congress. At these meetings most of the speakers denounced the revisionists, and many criticised the party leadership for tolerating the opportunists.

A large role in the ideological struggle against revisionism was played by Rosa Luxemburg's book *Social Reform or Revolution?* (published in April 1899), which contained a scathing scientific, Marxist criticism of the entire system of Bernstein's views. She proved incontrovertibly that opportunism was incompatible with Marxism, that "a socialism other than the socialism of Marx" was inconceivable.¹ Then there appeared Karl Kautsky's *Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Programme. An Anti-Critique*, which had wide repercussions in the international Social-Democratic movement.

Bernstein's actions were discussed at the Hanover Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in October 1899. The proceedings of this Congress were followed closely by Socialists in all European countries. Bernstein and his supporters were strongly censured by August Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and other speakers. Although a group of delegates spoke in Bernstein's defence, the Congress passed a resolution, moved by Bebel, by a majority of 216 against 21, in which it was stated that "the development of bourgeois society gives the party no grounds for abandoning or modifying its fundamental views about that society", that "the party's stand is, as before, that the class struggle must go on"

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *Sozialreform oder Revolution?*, Verlag der Leipziger Buchdruckerei Aktiengesellschaft, Leipzig, 1908, S. 49.

and that it considered "the winning of political power as the historic task of the working class".¹ The resolution rejected the attempts to orient the party on a renunciation of its revolutionary principles, to convert it "from a social-democratic Party into a democratic-socialist party of reform",² and induce it to modify its programme principles and tactics radically in a reformist spirit.

This resolution was evidence that one of the largest parties affiliated to the Second International was, on the whole, abiding by the principles of revolutionary Marxism and condemning revisionist ideas. However, the question of organisational separation from the revisionists was not even raised, and this had adverse consequences later.

The reluctance to carry the struggle against revisionism to its logical end—the expulsion of the opportunists from the party (although this question was raised repeatedly in polemics)—was due not only to the striving to preserve the party's unity at all costs. It reflected the circumstance that although the overwhelming majority in the party leadership condemned revisionism and firmly declared their adherence to the principles of revolutionary Marxism, far from all of them criticised Bernsteinism consistently and resolutely; many underrated the danger of the opportunist current. Kautsky, for example, took a long time to make up his mind to speak publicly against Bernstein—his reason was that it was difficult for him to criticise an old friend. Wilhelm Liebknecht, who denounced Bernstein's views from the very outset, did not at once see the danger of revisionism and for some time went on believing that it was not a serious threat to the movement. It was only after the publication of the notorious *Prerequisites of Socialism* that he joined in the sharp struggle against the Bernsteinians, speaking at party meetings in different cities in defence of the party's revolutionary programme and tactics. At the Hanover Congress Liebknecht conceded that "in the party there is a current whose influence may bring Social-Democracy into the camp of the bourgeois parties".³

A stronger stand was taken from the beginning by Bebel. As early as February 1898 he wrote anxiously that "the most dangerous opportunism is making rapid headway in our party".⁴ To be sure, at

¹ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten zu Hannover vom 9. bis 14. Oktober 1899*, Berlin, 1899, S. 243 (below—*Protokoll.... zu Hannover*).

² *Ibid.*, S. 244.

³ *Ibid.*, S. 197. Liebknecht's struggle against revisionism is described in V. Chubinsky, *Wilhelm Liebknecht—Soldier of the Revolution*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 199-207 (in Russian).

⁴ *August Bebel's Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky*, Van Gorkum & Co., Assen, 1971, S. 103.

the Stuttgart Congress he said he felt it would be premature to adopt any specific decisions against Bernstein, believing that this should be preceded by a broad debate in the party press. However, he soon began to speak more definitively, telling Bernstein that a "gulf has opened" between him (Bernstein) and the party.¹ Then, in a letter to Plekhanov he bluntly wrote that he no longer regarded Bernstein as a party comrade.² In a report, "Attacks on the Party's Fundamental Views and Tactics", delivered at the Hanover Congress he was sharply critical of Bernstein's views. With applause from the majority he declared: "I am making no secret of the fact that should the principles, of which Bernstein is the spokesman, prevail in the party, I would say to myself: For 36 years you have laboured in vain and now there is nothing left to do but retire."³ Lenin later called this report "a model of the defence of Marxist views and of the struggle for the truly socialist character of the workers' party".⁴

At the Congress, despite their condemnation of Bernstein's views and their recognition that these views conflicted with the party's programme and tactics, neither Bebel nor any other leader of the party raised the question of expelling Bernstein and his supporters from the SDPG. The revisionists were thus able to continue spreading their views in the party.

Among the German Social-Democrats the most consistent and clear-cut stand in the struggle against revisionism was taken by Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin. Rosa Luxemburg's speech at the Stuttgart Congress was a passionate call for the defence of revolutionary theory and tactics against the encroachments of the opportunists. She repeatedly demanded a complete break with Bernstein and his supporters. At Social-Democratic rallies she showed the petty-bourgeois class content of the revisionist theories and warned against the danger of opportunism. At the Hanover Congress her speech against Bernstein was one of the most profound in content and sharpest in form.⁵ Her articles and speeches earned her the hate and malice of Bernstein's supporters.

Clara Zetkin, too, was among the most irreconcilable opponents of revisionism. In the Social-Democratic press and at the Stuttgart

¹ Victor Adler, *Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky sowie Briefe von und an Ignaz Auer, Eduard Bernstein, Adolf Braun, Heinrich Dietz, Friedrich Ebert, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Hermann Müller und Paul Singer*, Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Wien, 1954, S. 258.

² *Literary Legacy of G. V. Plekhanov*, Miscellany V, Moscow, 1938, p. 269 (in Russian).

³ *Protokoll... zu Hannover*, S. 124.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "August Bebel," *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 300.

⁵ Rosa Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 1, 1893 bis 1905, Erster Halbband, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1970, S. 567-73.

and Hanover congresses she protested strongly against the attempts to soften criticism of Bernstein and consistently exposed revisionism.¹

In Italy Bernstein was strongly criticised by Antonio Labriola. A vigorous struggle against Bernstein's French supporters—the followers of Millerand—was conducted by Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue and other leaders of the French Workers' Party. There was stern criticism of Bernstein in the left wing of the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party, notably from Dimitr Blagoev.

Plekhanov did not pull any punches. He called Bernstein and his allies "the most vicious enemies of Marxism". His articles against Bernstein, Conrad Schmidt, and the Russian Bernsteinians inflicted heavy blows on revisionism. He believed that the criticism Bernstein got at the Stuttgart Congress was inadequate and in an open letter to Kautsky insisted on more resolute and trenchant articles against him in the press. He wrote that Bernstein "*is much closer to the petty-bourgeois supporters of 'social reform' than to revolutionary Social-Democracy*"² and held that the SDPG had made a mistake by keeping him in its ranks.

An outstanding contribution to the struggle against international Bernsteinism, including its manifestations in Russia, was made by Lenin. At the time the debates over Bernsteinism were raging he was in exile in Siberia and could not possibly have all the relevant information. Nonetheless, he closely followed the ideological struggle over the pronouncements of Bernstein and his supporters.³ By comparing their views with those of the Russian "critics" of Marx, the Economists, he drew the conclusion that there was a close ideological affinity between these currents and also between Bernstein and the "legal Marxists". After reading Bernstein's book he made the following comments: "It is unbelievably weak theoretically—mere repetition of someone else's ideas. There are phrases about criticism but no attempt at serious, independent criticism. In effect it is opportunism (or rather, Fabianism—the original of many of Bernstein's assertions and ideas is to be found in the Webbs' recent books), unbounded opportunism and possibilism...."⁴ Bernstein and his supporters, Lenin wrote elsewhere, "have not taught the proletariat any new methods of struggle; they have only retreated, borrowing fragments of backward theories and preaching to the proletariat, not

¹ Clara Zetkin, *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, Bd. 1, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1957, S. 142-51, 185-90.

² G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. XI, Moscow-Leningrad, 1928, p. 68 (in Russian).

³ See Chapter 10.

⁴ Lenin to his mother, September 1, 1899, *Collected Works*, Vol. 37, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 281.

the theory of struggle, but the theory of concession—concession to the most vicious enemies of the proletariat, the governments and bourgeois parties who never tire of seeking new means of baiting the socialists”.¹ Lenin characterised Bernsteinism as “an attempt to narrow the theory of Marxism, to convert the revolutionary workers’ party into a reformist party”.²

Revolutionary Marxists waged a struggle against revisionism in all the areas in which Bernstein and his supporters attacked the teaching of Marx: philosophy, political economy, scientific socialism, and the strategy and tactics of the socialist movement. There was determined resistance to Bernstein’s sallies against the theory of the socialist revolution.

Plekhanov, Mehring, Luxemburg, and Kautsky wiped the floor with Bernstein, Conrad Schmidt, and other revisionists who opposed Marxist dialectics and the materialist interpretation of history. Plekhanov’s contribution was particularly outstanding. He proved Bernstein’s ineptitude in philosophy,³ and the hollowness of his attacks on dialectical and historical materialism as the philosophical foundation of the proletariat’s world-view, and made it clear that the purpose of these attacks was to supplant Marxist philosophy with neo-Kantianism, scientific socialism with “ethical” socialism and thereby explain the rejection of the struggle for winning political power by the proletariat. He was one of the first to show that revisionism was a manifestation of bourgeois ideological influence on the working-class movement. Lenin later assessed Plekhanov’s effort in the struggle against revisionism in philosophy, writing that he was “the only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement to criticise the incredible platitudes of the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism”.⁴

Franz Mehring, too, did much to expose revisionist views on philosophical issues. He wrote a series of articles presenting a scholarly critique of neo-Kantianism which, like other Marxists, he regarded as the main philosophical source fuelling revisionism. In its objective content, neo-Kantianism, he wrote, is nothing less than an attempt to destroy historical materialism. Along with Plekhanov he showed the reactionary substance of the “Back to Kant” slogan seized by

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Our Programme”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 244.

² “A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats”, *ibid.*, p. 176.

³ G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 49.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, “Marxism and Revisionism”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 33; V. P. Tkachenko, “The Struggle Waged by G. V. Plekhanov Against Revisionism in Philosophy”, *A Critique of Modern Bourgeois Philosophy and Revisionism*, Moscow, 1959 (in Russian).

Bernstein and other revisionists. He staunchly defended historical materialism against revisionist attacks and distortions.¹

Rosa Luxemburg's articles against Bernstein featured criticisms of the philosophical views of the revisionists. She regarded Bernstein's renunciation of materialist dialectics, which she called the "way of thinking of the rising class-conscious proletariat",² as incontrovertible evidence of his defection to the bourgeois world-view, and qualified his negation of the materialist, scientific substantiation of socialism as a return to the utopian ideas, to reactionary idealism that had been transcended long before.

In their speeches and articles Bebel, Luxemburg, and others showed beyond the shadow of a doubt that there was no substance in Bernstein's revision of Marxist political economy, particularly in his assertion that Marx's theory of value could not explain the condition of the proletariat in capitalist society. The revolutionary Marxists drew upon an extensive array of facts to show the groundlessness of Bernstein's assertions that the development of capitalism had mitigated its contradictions. Rosa Luxemburg laid bare the actual role of the capitalist corporations, which, contrary to Bernstein's assertions, were not smoothing over the contradictions inherent in capitalism but "on the contrary, are one of the means created by the capitalist economy to increase its innate anarchy, reveal the contradictions implicit in it, and speed up its own demise".³

At the Hanover Congress Bebel demonstrated the viciousness of Bernstein's method and his unscrupulous handling of statistics as a means of refuting Marx's theory of the concentration of production. He showed that on closer examination the statistics on the growth of the population's income cited by Bernstein in support of his revisionist theories were evidence that the incomes of the capitalists were growing incomparably faster and in immeasurably larger proportions than the incomes of the working people. He pointed out that the facts were testimony of an exacerbation rather than a relaxation of class contradictions, and that the certain improvement of the proletariat's living and working conditions was the result not of changes in the essence of capitalist society but exclusively of the unremitting struggle of the working class.

The programme and tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy were a major point in the criticism of revisionism. Attention was given mainly to rebutting the basic idea of Bernsteinism, namely, that the proletarian revolution should be renounced as the sole means

¹ Mehring's contribution to the struggle against revisionism in philosophy is dealt with in Josef Schleifstein's *Franz Mehring. Sein marxistisches Schaffen*, S. 88-99.

² Rosa Luxemburg, op. cit., S. 47.

³ Ibid., S. 9.

of overthrowing the capitalist social system and ushering in socialism, that capitalist society was gradually evolving into a socialist society.

Rosa Luxemburg proved that Bernstein counterposed social reforms to revolution in order to justify his departure from revolutionary Marxism. The working class should, as it was doing, fight for reforms since they helped to improve its economic condition and obtain broader political rights, but in themselves reforms could not bring about the final emancipation of the proletariat. Rosa Luxemburg made the point that the proletariat was interested in reforms chiefly because they paved the way for the attainment of its ultimate goal—the abolition of the capitalist mode of production by revolution. “People who advocate the legal road of reform *in place of* and *in opposition to* the winning of political power and social revolution,” she wrote, “in fact choose not a more tranquil, not a more reliable and slower way to the same *aim* but an entirely *different aim* ... their purpose is not to establish the *socialist* system but only to reshape the *capitalist* system... and seek to destroy only the excrescences of capitalism, not capitalism itself.”¹

Similarly convincing arguments were presented to refute the revisionists’ assertion that the trade unions and cooperative societies were the instruments of society’s gradual socialisation. These organisations, Bebel and other revolutionary Marxists contended, were helping to achieve some improvement of the condition of the working class under capitalism, but by their nature they could not carry out any radical socialist reforms. They could contribute to such reforms by participating in the political class struggle, and for the triumph of socialism they would have, as Bebel said at the Hanover Congress of the SDPG, “at a certain stage of development to wage a life-and-death struggle against the capitalist social order”.²

The revolutionary Marxists eloquently gave the lie to Bernstein’s theses claiming a supraclass character for democracy and, consequently, for the contemporary bourgeois state. Theses such as these were the revisionists’ principal argument in favour of the possibility of capitalism gradually evolving into socialism and of the “superfluousness” of the socialist revolution. Democracy, Plekhanov wrote in this connection, “does not put an end to *economic* domination of one class by another—the proletariat by the bourgeoisie — and, moreover, it does not put an end to the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie or the proletariat’s need to fight with all the means that prove to be *expedient* at a given time”.³

¹ Ibid., S. 39-40.

² Protokoll ... zu Hannover, S. 118.

³ G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 55-56.

In a polemic with the revisionists, Rosa Luxemburg declared that "democracy is vital not because it makes the conquest of political power by the proletariat *superfluous* but, on the contrary, because it makes this conquest *necessary* and *possible*".¹ Wilhelm Liebknecht spoke in the same vein, noting that, given all their significance for the proletariat's struggle for emancipation, suffrage and parliamentary activity were "not an end but only the means of achieving that end".²

The revolutionary Marxists showed the hollowness of Bernstein's contention that since society was developing democratically and the "propertied minority" could therefore no longer erect "serious obstacles to social progress"³ the call for a violent revolution had become an "empty phrase". While rejecting Bernstein's arguments, the revolutionary Marxists pointed out that they did not regard armed violence as the sole means of accomplishing a revolution, but that the resistance of the bourgeoisie would quite likely compel the proletariat to have recourse to violence. "The *choice* of the *form* in which the proletariat will have to use its revolutionary strength," Plekhanov wrote, "*depends not on its good will but on circumstances*. That form is best that most surely and soonest leads to victory over the enemy. And if in a given country and under given circumstances a '*violent revolution*' proves to be the most expedient mode of action, then he who in opposition to it presents considerations of principle such as we hear from Bernstein is a despicable doctrinaire if not a traitor."⁴

The opponents of revisionism unconditionally rejected Bernstein's essentially defamatory statements that the working class was "incapable" of assuming political power, that it lacked the knowledge to administer society. "The organised and class-conscious proletariat," Bebel said, "has now everywhere shown and is daily proving that it is incomparably more developed politically and hardworking than the bourgeoisie."⁵

In all countries the vast majority of the Socialists took a negative view of the arguments of Bernstein and his supporters. The appearance of revisionism was nevertheless fraught with serious danger for the further development of the socialist working-class movement; it by no means was an accidental fall of individual Socialists who shortly before had been regarded as proponents of revolutionary Marxism. Revisionism mirrored the mood of some segments of the

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *op. cit.*, S. 42.

² Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Kein Kompromiss, kein Wahlbündniss*, Verlag Expedition der Buchhandlung Vorwärts, Berlin, 1899, S. 19-20.

³ Ed. Bernstein, *op. cit.*, S. 183.

⁴ G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 56.

⁵ *Protokoll ... zu Hannover*, S. 119.

working class and also of intellectuals and petty-bourgeois elements who had associated themselves with the movement. New forces burdened by petty-bourgeois notions and poorly acquainted with Marxism had joined in the liberation struggle of the proletariat: some were swept into the ranks of the proletariat with the steady influx of petty-bourgeois elements, peasants, and people from urban strata, others were attracted by the successes of the movement. "The growth of the working-class movement," Lenin wrote, "necessarily attracts to its ranks a certain number of petty-bourgeois elements, people who are under the spell of bourgeois ideology, who find it difficult to rid themselves of that ideology and continually lapse back into it."¹

But the social base of revisionism consisted not only of such elements; it included those segments of the proletariat that comprised the labour aristocracy. It was this aristocracy that the imperialist bourgeoisie hoped to use as its main instrument for ideologically disarming the working class, diverting it from the struggle for society's revolutionary transformation, and making it distrustful of its ability to win political power. This had been the bourgeoisie's objective earlier, when it used violence in an effort to halt the development of the organised revolutionary working-class movement, prevent the establishment of independent proletarian political parties, and retain its influence over the proletariat by enlisting workers into the organisations sponsored by it. At the close of the nineteenth century it became quite evident that the development of the liberation movement of the proletariat could not be halted solely by methods such as these. Revolutionary Marxist ideology became predominant in the socialist working-class movement of most European nations, and the bourgeoisie needed other means to paralyse its influence. One of these means was revisionism—an attempt to erode the working class from within with the hands of those of its segments that were susceptible to the influence of reformist ideology. To quote Lenin, revisionism was "one of the chief manifestations, if not the chief, of bourgeois influence on the proletariat and bourgeois corruption of the workers".²

Little wonder that the German liberal bourgeoisie commended the efforts of Bernstein. Lenin noted later that "Bernstein was ... carried shoulder-high by the German liberals, and lauded to the skies by all the 'progressive' bourgeois newspapers".³ These quarters saw

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 230.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Fool's Haste Is No Speed", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, p. 322.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 201.

the emergence of revisionism as a sign of a crisis of Marxism, as foreshadowing the weakening and a split of the Social-Democratic movement. Even in tsarist Russia Bernstein's book was received with such interest in the ruling camp that it had three editions within a short span of time, while Zubatov, colonel of the gendarmerie and *agent provocateur*, recommended it to workers.

By their criticism of Bernsteinism the revolutionary Marxists greatly curbed the spread of revisionist views. But they were unable to eliminate its influence altogether because in all the economically developed countries there was a growing labour aristocracy, on whom the revisionists depended. But there was more to it than just the existence of a social base and the designs of the magnates of capital: in the working-class movement itself many leaders were, wittingly or unwittingly, becoming accomplices of the revisionists by the tolerance of their intrigues. As a result, although Bernsteinism had not yet become the official ideology of socialist parties, it continued to exist as a stream in the organised working-class movement. This exposed the movement to serious danger.

Part Four

A NEW PHASE OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT. COMMENCEMENT OF THE LENINIST STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM

Chapter 7

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA ENTERS ITS PROLETARIAN STAGE

THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH RUSSIA BECAME A WEAK LINK OF IMPERIALISM

Qualitative changes characterised by the expansion of the proletariat's revolutionary potential took place in the international working-class movement during the closing years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century. This was closely linked to the numerical growth and enhanced significance of the Russian contingent of the international proletariat, a development that had a number of objective and subjective causes. Among the first, the most notable was the sharp deepening of the crisis of the entire system of economic, social, and political relations in pre-reform Russia.

The reform of 1861 greatly expedited the nation's capitalist development. This development, Lenin wrote, proceeded "at such a rapid rate that in a few decades it wrought a transformation that had taken centuries in some of the old countries of Europe".¹ However, it was impeded by survivals of feudalism enmeshing all aspects of the economy, of politics, and of ideology. The most significant of these anachronisms was the tsarist autocracy, which Lenin called "the most formidable bulwark of all this barbarism".² Survivals of serfdom in the countryside, conserved in the interests of the big landowners, were one of the most potent obstacles to Russia's economic and social advancement.

Faced with the necessity of agreeing to an agrarian reform the Russian landowners took steps to protect their interests, chiefly their huge landed estates. In Russia's agriculture capitalist development thus followed the Prussian model, which was slow and painful for the peasants. The introduction of capitalist relations in the agrarian sector was greatly retarded but, needless to say, not stopped.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The 'Peasant Reform' and the Proletarian-Peasant Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 122.

² V. I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 27.

While semi-serf relations were still fairly stable in the central regions, they were weakening in the outlying areas. On large territories (Novorussia, the area north of the Caucasus, the Lower Volga, and the Trans-Volga area) capitalist commodity production, particularly grain production, took shape much more easily and quickly than in regions with traditional large estates.¹

The character of the changes to be observed in the Russian countryside at the turn of the century is illustrated in the following table compiled by Lenin from statistics for 1905.²

Basic groups of landholders	Number of holdings (1,000,000)	Total area of land (1,000,000 dessiatins)
1. Ruined peasants, crushed by feudal exploitation (up to 15 dessiatins)	10.5	75.0
2. Middle peasants (15-20 dessiatins)	1.0	15.0
3. Peasant bourgeoisie and capitalist landownership (20-500 dessiatins)	1.5	70.0
4. Feudal estates (over 500 dessiatins)	0.03	70.0

Although within a period of somewhat over four decades after 1861 landed property diminished by one-third,³ it still exercised an enormous influence on the entire system of agrarian relations. By its size the purely capitalist property in land, represented chiefly by the peasant bourgeoisie, became equal to the estates employing serf labour; over two-thirds of the land was at the stage of transitional relations. The proportion of landed estates was decreasing, while that of peasant holdings was growing.⁴

Most of the latter were small or tiny and could not ensure anything near a bearable existence for tens of millions of peasants. Added to this, the system of so-called *otrezki* (arable land and pastures that belonged to peasant communes prior to the 1861 reform and were cut off in favour of the landowners) seriously hindered the running of peasant households, made the peasantry dependent on the landowners, and forced the small and middle peasants into bondage to the kulaks, usurers, and merchants. Hence, even those sectors of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1972, p. 594.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, 1967.

³ V. V. Svyatlovsky, *Mobilisation of Land Property in Russia (1861-1908)*, St. Petersburg, 1911, pp. 110-11 (in Russian).

⁴ *On the Socio-Economic History of Russia. A Collection of Essays*, Moscow, 1971, p. 191 (in Russian).

agriculture in which capitalist relations were being established were dominated by early forms of capitalist rule similar to those that existed in industry at the manufactory stage of its development.¹

Agriculture's slow capitalist development adversely affected industrial growth. It gave rise to a serious contradiction between the two pillars of Russia's economy. Although peasant resettlement and the spread of commercial links to outlying regions somewhat blunted this contradiction, the factors springing from the prevalence of survivals of serfdom—the narrowness of the peasant market, the concentration of large funds outside the sphere of capitalist circulation, and the retention of large masses of peasants in the countryside mainly by non-economic methods—limited the potentialities for Russia's economic, mainly industrial, development.

Russia entered the industrial revolution later than some Western countries. But in the late 1870s and the early 1880s it more or less completed the transition from the manufactory to the capitalist factory.² The proportion of large factories also grew.

As in other countries, the industrialisation rate, particularly in industries manufacturing means of production, rose markedly on account of the unprecedented expansion of the railway network. At the same time, this expansion was crucial to capitalism's spread in breadth and to the formation of an all-Russia market. A total of 5,283 kilometres of railway track were laid in the five years from 1884 to 1889. But this was not the limit. In the period from 1890 to 1900 nearly 21,000 kilometres of railway track, or more than in the preceding 20 years, were laid in Russia.³

In 1890-1900 the nation's industrial product doubled, with the output of means of production almost tripling and of consumer goods increasing by 78 per cent. This brought about a new balance between the two subdivisions of industrial production: the share of the first subdivision grew from 30 to 39 per cent. It was in the 1890s that the foundations of big capitalist industry were laid in Russia. The output of pig iron rose by 200 per cent and of steel by 500 per cent, the value of the engineering industry's output more than quadrupled, and the output of oil went up by nearly 200 per cent and of coal by 150 per cent.⁴

¹ I. D. Kovalchenko, "Lenin on the Character of Capitalist Russia's Agrarian System", *Voprosy istorii*, No. 3, 1970, pp. 41-42.

² V. I. Bovykin, S. S. Dmitriev, I. D. Kovalchenko, K. N. Tarnovsky, *Essays on the History of the USSR, 1861-1904*, Moscow, 1960, p. 91 (in Russian).

³ T. S. Khachaturov, *Railway Transport in the USSR*, Moscow, 1952, p. 23 (in Russian).

⁴ P. A. Khromov, *Russia's Economic Development in the 19th-20th Centuries*, Moscow, 1950, pp. 452-53, 456-61; L. A. Mendelson, *Theory and History of Economic Crises and Cycles*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1959, pp. 736-37, 751-57 (both in Russian).

Industrialisation gave birth to new industrial regions. Outstanding among these was the southern industrial region with the Donbas coal mines and the Krivoi Rog iron-ore deposits forming the main sources of raw materials for Russia's iron and steel industry. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century there were in this region 17 metallurgical factories with the full production cycle. The south accounted for 69 per cent of Russia's coal, 57 per cent of its iron ore, 52 per cent of its pig iron, and up to 44 per cent of its steel.¹

As we have noted, towards the beginning of the twentieth century Russia drew close to France for the total volume of industrial output (outstripping it in the output of pig iron and steel, while still remaining behind in the output of consumer goods). But both in terms of absolute and per capita output it remained considerably behind the countries with the highest level of capitalist development. Thus, its metallurgical output at the close of the nineteenth century was one-fifth that of the USA, one-third that of Britain, and 60 per cent that of Germany.²

In Russia the process of capitalist industrialisation was accompanied by rapid monopolisation of industry and centralisation of banking. In the early years of the twentieth century there already were monopolies in all key industries manufacturing means of production. They were also springing up in the major industries producing consumer goods. The first regional monopolies appeared.³ All this was evidence that the conditions for Russia's entry into the stage of imperialism were maturing rapidly.

While it had all the features of this stage of capitalism, Russia's nascent imperialism had some specifics of its own. Not all of its characteristic features were clear-cut. The export of capital, which had played a major role in the emergence of imperialism in Britain, Germany, and France, was not typical in Russia. On the contrary, Russia imported much more capital than it exported. The main reasons were that Russia took the road of capitalist development much later and required investments on a scale that could not be met by the Russian bourgeoisie. Moreover, tsarism was borrowing large sums of money from foreign banks for the maintenance of its army,

¹ P. I. Lyashchenko, *A History of the Soviet National Economy*, Vol. II, Moscow, pp. 144-46 (in Russian).

² P. A. Khromov, *Russia's Economic Development. An Outline of Russia's Economy from Ancient Times to the Great October Revolution*, Moscow, 1974, p. 296 (in Russian).

³ Data on the monopoly associations in Russia are given in Chapter 1; also see: Y. I. Livshin, *Monopolies in Russia's Economy*, Moscow, 1961; V. Y. Lavrychev, *Monopoly Capital in Russia's Textile Industry (1900-1917)*, Moscow, 1963; *Monopolies in Russia's Metallurgical Industry. 1907-1917. Documents and Other Materials*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1963; A. L. Tsukernik, *The Prodamet Syndicate*, Moscow, 1959; L. Y. Shepelev, *Joint-Stock Companies in Russia*, Leningrad, 1973 (all in Russian).

police, and gendarmerie in order to retain its precarious hold on power. This resulted in Russia's economic and, to some extent, political dependence on the creditor-nations.

One of the effects of this lag in the export of capital was Russia's insignificant participation in international monopolies and in the division of the world market.¹ Also, the revenues from the pillage of dependent Asian countries and from the economic exploitation of the Russian empire's outlying possessions were smaller than the revenues of Britain, France, Belgium, and other colonial powers from the same sources.

This had significant social effects: the Russian monopolies did not have such large funds as their counterparts in the developed Western countries to sustain an influential workers' aristocracy. The latter's weakness eroded imperialism's positions in Russia in the unfolding class battles. But the principal factor determining the specific character of Russian imperialism, of its weakness in the system of imperialist nations, was the intertwining of capitalism with deep-rooted survivals of serfdom.

Rapid industrial development was, of course, accompanied by a significant numerical growth of the working class. As early as the beginning of the 1890s there were in Russia approximately 10 million wage workers, including upwards of 1,500,000 factory, mining and railway workers, roughly 3,500,000 agricultural wage workers, about a million building workers, about two million lumber workers, navvies, and goods loaders; some two million people worked at home or in small-scale industry². According to the 1897 census and some other sources, there were 14,200,000 wage workers at the close of the nineteenth century.

The highest growth rate and consolidation of the proletariat was to be observed in factory production, mining, and the railways. In 1905 these industries employed 3,019,000 workers.³ A factor that was to be of immense significance for the class struggle in Russia was the far greater concentration of the proletariat at large factories, than in other countries, including those with a higher level of economic development. This is exemplified by the fact that nearly half of the workforce (46 per cent) was concentrated at the largest factories (employing over 500 workers each). This concentration of the

¹ R. K. Puzakova, *Lenin on the Specifics of Imperialism in Russia*, Saratov, 1967 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 581.

³ A. L. Sidorov, "The Centre of the World Revolutionary Movement Shifts to Russia", *The First Russian Revolution (1905-1907) and the International Working-Class Movement*, Part I, Moscow, 1955, p. 74 (in Russian).

industrial proletariat's core strengthened its position in the struggle against capitalist rule, a struggle that was steadily growing sharper.

But the total absence of political rights made this a formidable struggle with the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy and the political domination of the big landowners as its paramount aim. Without crushing tsarism and its principal social pillar, the nobility, it was impossible to go over to the basic task of the militant proletariat—the revolutionary extirpation of the capitalist system.

The overthrow of the autocratic-landowner system was also the aim of other participants in the liberation movement in Russia. Of the acute internal conflicts implicit in Russian society, one of the most significant was the contradiction between the millions-strong peasantry, that comprised the bulk of the population, and the landowning nobility. True, the introduction of capitalist relations in agriculture speeded up the differentiation of the peasant masses which gave rise to new contradictions. However, the big landowners supported by the tsarist autocracy remained the principal obstacle to the progressive development of the Russian countryside. The antagonism between the entire peasantry and the entire landowner class, Lenin noted, "has the most vital and most practical significance".¹

The revolutionary potential of the Russian peasantry was in fact not exhausted. "The role of the peasantry as a class that provides fighters against the autocracy and against the survivals of serfdom is by now played out in the West, but not yet in Russia," Lenin wrote at the time.² He made the point that "the peasantry is capable of becoming a whole-hearted and most radical adherent of the democratic revolution".³

This potential could not manifest itself as long as the peasantry was virtually the sole force in the liberation struggle. Of course, in post-reform Russia there was one more class objectively interested in political changes. This was the bourgeoisie. But in Russia the bourgeoisie was the creation of the late development of capitalism, when in the West the working class was already a most serious threat to the capitalist system and in the period of the Paris Commune had even assumed power. It asserted its position more and more vocally in Russia, too, especially in the 1890s, and in the long run this determined the attitude of the Russian capitalists to tsarism and the landowners. The bourgeoisie was disturbed by its lack of poli-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 423.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 242.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 98.

tical rights, by the fact that it could not influence affairs of state to an extent commensurate with its growing economic strength. Its ideologists saw that the political line pursued by the nobility was fraught with domestic and external complications. "The interests of the bourgeoisie as a class," Lenin wrote, "...clash more and more with the autocracy as time goes on."¹

But as time went on the Russian bourgeoisie was increasingly frightened by the growth of the working class, its revolutionary potential, and its determination to wage an unremitting struggle for the freedom and happiness of all working people. The Russian bourgeoisie had long-standing, strong links with tsarism and the landowners, having adapted itself to their domination and participating in the semi-serf exploitation of the peasants. It, Lenin wrote, was "closely linked with the landed nobility economically, their mutual interests are ... closely intertwined".² The bourgeoisie's protests against the autocracy were for that reason timid and inconsistent. It was in many cases ready to sacrifice its own political ideals in order to retain its economic positions.

Although towards the close of the nineteenth century the Russian bourgeoisie numbered approximately 1,500,000, it was neither organised nor politically developed.³ It is indicative that for a long time it was not the urban bourgeoisie that was the force opposed to tsarism but the liberal landowners, who had adopted capitalist methods of management and saw that there was an urgent need for sweeping bourgeois reforms. But they, too, had no consistent political guideline. The liberals expressed their dissatisfaction with the autocracy, to quote Lenin, "only in the form *sanctioned* by the autocracy itself, i.e., the form that the autocracy does not consider dangerous to the autocracy".⁴

Consequently, the peasants could not count on anything approaching firm support from the bourgeoisie against the landowner-oppressors and their political mainstay, tsarism. The democratic aspirations of the peasant masses could assume their proper place in the Russian liberation movement only in combination with the class war of the proletariat against capitalism. Lenin wrote that "the Russian Social-Democrat can and must, without betraying his

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Autocracy and the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 23.

² V. I. Lenin, "Fundamental Problems of the Election Campaign", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 416.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Social Structure of State Power", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17; V. Y. Laverychev, *The Big Bourgeoisie in Post-Reform Russia (1861-1900)*, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian).

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 270.

convictions in the slightest, but, rather because of those convictions, insist that the working-class party should inscribe on its banner support for the peasantry (*not by any means* as a class of small proprietors or small farmers), *insofar as the peasantry is capable of a revolutionary struggle against the survivals of serfdom in general and against the autocracy in particular*".¹

The aspirations of the ethnic minorities for liberation were also a very considerable factor. Relations between nationalities concerned the interests of many millions: the non-Russian peoples of the Russian empire comprised more than half of its population. They were subjected to dual oppression, and their national identity was brutally suppressed. The natural wealth of the non-Russian regions was ruthlessly exploited and their economic development was artificially retarded. "The whole history of the autocracy," Lenin wrote, "is one of wholesale grabbing of local, regional, and national lands."² Harassment of "aliens" (Finns, Poles, Armenians, and others) was further intensified from the close of the nineteenth century onwards.

The anger provoked among the peoples of Russia by the brutal oppression of nationalities, an anger that frequently erupted into open struggle, could not but eventually shake the rule of the exploiting classes of Russia. It was the proletariat's mission to provide leadership also to the struggle for the satisfaction of the vital aspirations of the tsarism-oppressed peoples of Central Asia, the Caucasus, Poland, the Baltic region, and other territories, a struggle that was part and parcel of the democratic movement.

The revolutionary explosion in Russia was thus made inevitable by the unparalleled combination of social contradictions, by the most diverse forms of oppression and exploitation that placed a burden of unbearable hardship on the vast majority of the working people. The objective aim of this explosion was to deliver Russia from precapitalist forms of the economy and of socio-political life. But the history of Russia shaped out in such a way as to bring the working class to a position where it was becoming the decisive force of the imminent bourgeois-democratic revolution. As a result of this development of the liberation movement, Russia became a weak link of the world imperialist system and the main arena of the struggle for society's revolutionary transformation along the principles of socialism.

It must be remembered that Russia had very strongly influenced the course of world history. Although tsarism's role of international

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 242.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 334.

policeman was largely nullified, in the eyes of progressives throughout the world tsarist Russia was still one of the mainstays of international reaction. A victorious democratic revolution in Russia, Lenin wrote, would open immense prospects for "the European proletariat, which for so many years has been artificially held back from the pursuit of happiness by the reactionary militarists and landlords".¹ Moreover, the liberation struggle waged by the working people of Russia was of great significance for the hundreds of millions enslaved by imperialism in Asian countries. Territorial proximity made this inescapable. Geographically, economically, and historically, Lenin wrote, Russia belonged not only to Europe but also to Asia. "The overthrow of tsarism in Russia," he noted, "...will be the turning-point in the history of all countries: it will facilitate the task of the workers of all nations, in all states, in all parts of the globe."²

In other words, the prospects of the world revolutionary process largely depended on the extent to which the working class of Russia carried out its historical mission. This predetermined the gradual shift of the centre of the international revolutionary movement to Russia.³

When Engels analysed the circumstances that turned the German proletariat into the vanguard of the European revolutionary movement, he drew attention to two contributing factors: first, the working class of Germany joined the socialist movement later than that of other countries with the result that the German proletarian revolutionaries were able to use the experience that the British and French working-class movement had acquired at great cost. Second, the German working-class movement was distinguished by a high theoretical level.

In Russia the working-class movement had both these advantages. The experience it could draw upon had grown richer, while the theoretical traditions of the Russian revolutionary movement received their highest expression in Leninism, which determined the development of Marxist scientific thought and revolutionary practice in the new historical epoch.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Struggle of the Proletariat and the Servility of the Bourgeoisie", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 541.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Beginning of the Revolution in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 100.

³ A. L. Sidorov, op. cit.; E. K. Beradze, *Some Questions Related to the Shift of the Centre of the World Revolutionary Movement to Russia*, Tbilisi, 1969; K. I. Suvorov, *The Shift of the Centre of the World Revolutionary Movement to Russia*, Moscow, 1970 (all in Russian).

THE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE
IN THE RUSSIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT
IN THE 1870s THROUGH THE EARLY 1890s

Leninism's emergence was predicated by the need to answer the new questions that the international and Russian working-class movement was facing at the close of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. A direct continuation and creative enlargement of Marxism, the Leninist teaching was built up through the creative generalisation of the experience of the world liberation movement as a whole and in a tireless struggle against all anti-Marxist ideological conceptions and schools.

In Russia the ideological struggle was particularly sharp. The spread of Marxism was stubbornly resisted by exponents of Populist (Narodnik) peasant socialism, who failed or refused to see that post-reform Russia was advancing along the road of capitalist development and that the rural commune was disintegrating and steadily becoming less suitable as the starting point of social reforms.

Narodism passed through several stages of development on account of objective reasons, chiefly the peasantry's stratification resulting from the penetration of capitalist relations into the countryside. The Narodniks of the 1870s, who are usually called revolutionary, differed markedly from their successors, the liberal Narodniks of the 1890s. But their basic ideological premises were identical. Lenin wrote that "the *fundamental* socio-economic views of all Narodniks coincide".¹ They saw the peasants as the main revolutionary force and idealised the peasant commune.

In characterising the development of progressive thought in Russia, Lenin noted that it "sought eagerly for a correct revolutionary theory, and followed with the utmost diligence and thoroughness each and every 'last word' in this sphere in Europe and America".² This was also true of the revolutionary Narodniks, with some of them even participating in the international socialist movement.³

However, the Narodnik belief that Russia's road to socialism was "exclusive", and their conspiratorial tactics lent an obvious bias to the study of Western revolutionary experience and its comparison with the experience of Russia. The Narodniks turned to Marxism chiefly to "prove" that it was alien to Russia, that it was inapplicable to the conditions prevailing in Russia. The utopian ideas of "peasant socialism" deprived even the most thoughtful and principled

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Heritage We Renounce", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 514.

² V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 25.

³ See Volume One.

spokesmen of Narodism of the possibility of understanding the basic tenets and universality of Marxism.¹

Initially the Narodniks were influenced mostly by Bakuninism with its extreme idealisation of the peasantry. Bakunin believed that the Russian people, by which he meant the peasantry, were ready for a socialist revolution. "Instead of teaching the people, we should incite them to rebellion,"² he said. Renunciation of political struggle was another unalterable tenet of the first Narodniks.

The Narodnik doctrine was embodied in the campaign of "going to the people" of the 1870s, which was perhaps the only attempt known to world history of a progressive intelligentsia of an enslaved nation entering, despite all official bans, into direct contact with their downtrodden people with the purpose of enlightening and stirring them to fight for their emancipation. By the spring of 1874 this movement had embraced a huge part of the Russian empire—at least 37 provinces (gubernias). But its results were less than disappointing for the Narodniks: the myth of the Russian muzhik's (peasant's) "natural socialism" was completely dispersed.³ The sacrifice—by the autumn of 1874 more than a thousand persons had been imprisoned—did not justify itself. In Russia, Lenin was to write later, anarchism "in the past (the seventies of the nineteenth century)... was able to develop inordinately and to reveal its absolute erroneousness, its unfitness to serve the revolutionary class as a guiding theory".⁴

Under pressure of circumstances the revolutionary Narodniks renounced one of the basic principles of anarchism—non-participation in the political struggle—realising that they would not achieve their aims without the overthrow of the autocracy, which was the prop of everything reactionary and retrograde in Russia. With this new development was linked the formation of the Narodnaya Volya (1879) organisation. However, this organisation was oriented towards individual acts of terrorism against members of the government, seeing these acts as the main form of political struggle. It gave its attention not only to the peasantry but also to other segments of the population. There was a "striving to enlist *all* the discontented in the organisation and to direct this organisation to resolute struggle against the autocracy".⁵ Of course, among the discontented increasing signi-

¹ B. P. Kozmin, *The Russian Section of the First International*, Moscow, 1957 (in Russian).

² Quote from Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, "Ein Komplott gegen die Internationale Arbeiterassoziation", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 401.

³ Y. Z. Polevoi, *Birth of Marxism in Russia, 1883-1894*, Moscow, 1959 p. 49 (in Russian).

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 33.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 474.

ficance was acquired by the workers. True, there had been links between revolutionary Narodniks and workers earlier: the latter attended Narodnik study groups. For their part, the Narodniks attracted workers chiefly for propaganda purposes among the peasants. More, they saw the workers not as an independent social stratum but as peasants for whom the factory only provided seasonal work: "Far from being a mass isolated from the peasants, they are part of the peasantry."¹

The development of capitalist relations, the numerical growth of the working class, and the intensification of the mass struggle waged by it did not modify the Narodnik view that the proletariat was no more than an ancillary force in the revolutionary struggle; the only change was seen in an invigoration of the attempts by the Narodniks to win more influence over the proletariat, which, as many of them began to realise, had an immense potential. In the early 1880s the Narodnaya Volya study groups, which functioned in a number of large cities, had a membership of up to 1,500 workers.² Narodnaya Volya propaganda helped to enlighten advanced workers and draw them into the democratic struggle, but could not awaken their class consciousness and did not show them the goal to which they aspired spontaneously. Hence the constant attempts of the workers studying in these groups to go beyond the Narodnik notions. This was shown, in particular, by the celebrated speech made by P. Alexeyev at the trial of the All-Russia Revolutionary Organisation in March 1877.

This tendency was even more striking in the earlier mentioned first political workers' organisations of the second half of the 1870s and the beginning of the 1880s. Needless to say, in this situation they came under Narodnik influence. This was seen, for example, in the fact that the idea of the proletariat as an independent class capable of heading the other revolutionary forces was not formulated in their programme documents. But there already was the understanding that the proletariat was a progressive class with an important role to play in the liberation movement. As we have already noted, this was stated in the programme adopted in December 1878 by the North-Russian Workers' Union. Yet even the Programme of Worker-Members of the Narodnaya Volya Party, adopted two years later, contained the traditional thesis that the peasantry was the "main popular force."³

The divergence between the Narodniks of the 1870s and advanced workers was most evident in the question of the political struggle,

¹ *Revolutionary Journalism of the 1870s*, Rostov-on-Don (date of publication not indicated), p. 196 (in Russian).

² *A History of the Working Class of Russia, 1861-1900*, Moscow, 1972, p. 109 (in Russian).

³ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1964, p. 85 (in Russian).

which the latter felt was needed despite the Narodnik doctrine. In 1879 the newspaper *Zemlya i Volya* wrote that members of the North-Russian Workers' Union were "devoting much too much time" to this issue. In their reply members of the Union contended that political freedom was crucial to "the earliest possible upheaval", an indispensable condition for the abolition of social oppression. Another charge, likewise challenged, was that the Union was "imitating German Social-Democracy". Actually, it was not a matter of imitating the West European socialist movement but of drawing upon its lessons. In its reply the Union's leaders conceded that they had succumbed to the spirit of various Western programmes.¹

Of course, proletarian ideology was still to shake off the influence of Narodism. This was a protracted process on account of, among other things, the repressions of the 1880s provoked by the assassination of the tsar and other actions by members of the Narodnaya Volya.

Terrorism and conspiracies, which supplanted the "going to the people", were a sort of ill-advised antithesis of the naivete of young intellectuals, who wore "peasant" clothes and used a "peasant" language to tell the peasants what was "good for them". The Narodniks had recourse to terrorism, seeing no other way of fighting for the happiness of the masses. The terrorists of the 1880s entered the history of the Russian liberation movement as "chevaliers sans peur et sans reproche". They were the first in the nation's history to demonstrate the real strength of organised revolutionaries, a force before which the tsar trembled.

The personal bravery and heroism of the Narodniks, and the sacrifices made by them in the unequal struggle against tsarism won them genuine respect among the Russian intelligentsia and far beyond Russia's borders. "Their sacrifices," Lenin said, "were certainly not in vain. They doubtlessly contributed... to the... education of the Russian people. But they did not, and could not, achieve their immediate aim of generating a people's revolution."² They fell short of that aim chiefly because the civil courage of the heroes of revolutionary Narodism was in irreconcilable conflict with their ideological immaturity. Because they drew a dividing line between the political system and its socio-economic basis they saw the autocracy as a supra-class and, consequently, easily eliminable institution. They believed that terror against the ruling elite would ensure a leap directly into socialism, by-passing the capitalist stage of development.

¹ *The Working-Class Movement in 19th-Century Russia*, Vol. II, Part 2, A Collection of Documents and Other Materials, Moscow, 1950, pp. 244, 245 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 242-43.

The untenability of this utopian conception was seen very soon, after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, when the Narodnik movement entered an unresolvable crisis. The very fact of transition to participation in the political struggle signified a reconsideration of the Narodnik doctrine, the explosion of this doctrine from within. Moreover, the form of this transition—through individual terror—ruled out the possibility of any real successes in the attempts to crush the autocracy.

In characterising revolutionary Narodism, Lenin wrote that it “made a big *step forward*” compared with the other ideologies of the 1860s, “by posing for the attention of society” questions which the latter were still (at the time) unable to raise, the chief of which was the question of capitalism.¹ But the solution offered for this question by the Narodniks was totally unsatisfactory.

Although they were refuted by reality, the Narodnik ideas had tenacious roots. Lenin was the first to show that the reason for this was that socio-economically Narodism represented the “interests and ideas of the Russian small producer”.² Because of the duality of the petty bourgeoisie, the ideology of revolutionary Narodism ultimately combined the most diverse features. Lenin saw the Narodnik doctrine as consisting of “elements of *democracy*

“+ utopian socialism

“+ petty-bourgeois reforms

“+ the reactionary character of the petty bourgeois”.³

The first two elements noted by Lenin were particularly characteristic of the early Narodniks. Their popularity was due not only to their personal charm and courage. More important was their determined protest against liberal moderation, their aim of getting the oppressed and the exploited to act, and their warm sympathy for the latter.⁴ Lenin stressed that Narodism represented the ideology of the “*petty-bourgeois* struggle of democratic capitalism against liberal-landlord capitalism, of ‘American’ capitalism against ‘Prussian’ capitalism”,⁵ and in this he saw Narodism’s importance in history. Thus, he linked his assessment of Narodism with a characteristic of two possible ways of capitalist development in agriculture; it was

¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Heritage We Renounce”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 516-524.

² V. I. Lenin, “The Economic Content of Narodism”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 404.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Notebooks on the Agrarian Question, 1900-1916*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 21-22 (in Russian).

⁴ I. K. Pantin, *Socialist Thought in Russia: Transition from a Utopia to a Science*, Moscow, 1973, p. 133 (in Russian).

⁵ V. I. Lenin, “Letter to Skvortsov-Stepanov”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 119; *Lenin and Russian Socio-Political Thought of the 19th-Early 20th Century*, Leningrad, 1969, pp. 168-170 (in Russian).

precisely militant peasant democracy, without which the American way was inconceivable, that gave grounds for expecting the Russian peasants to support the proletariat in the resolute struggle for the revolutionary eradication of all survivals of serfdom, including the autocracy. This was exactly what subsequently happened in the three Russian revolutions.

The ideological principles of Narodism were criticised by spokesmen of the Russian liberation movement as early as the 1870s. This criticism originated from the Russian section of the First International that was founded by a group of Nikolai Chernyshevsky's followers and had constant contact with Marx and Engels. However, the low development level of capitalist relations in Russia in those years was a serious obstacle to the realisation that Marxism alone gave the key to understanding reality and could be the dependable ideological foundation of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

"Marx and Engels, who both knew Russian and read Russian books, took a lively interest in the country, followed the Russian revolutionary movement with sympathy and maintained contact with Russian revolutionaries."¹ Marx and Engels often spoke of this themselves; they were aware of Russia's herculean revolutionary potential, whose realisation could not but exercise an enormous influence on the world revolutionary process. In 1880 Engels wrote to one of his correspondents in Russia: "We are very much interested in everything that promotes ... even indirectly, the revolutionary movement in a country like Russia."² Hence the immense significance that Marx and Engels attached to the dissemination of their teaching in Russia. Marx was gratified to learn that a Russian edition of the first volume of *Capital* was published in 1872 with a large printing (3,000 copies) for those years; this was the first foreign translation of Marx's immortal work.

But in the 1870s Marx and Engels were in contact in Russia not with adherents of their teaching—for there were none at the time—but with the Narodniks, who had quite different views about the prospects and motive forces of the liberation struggle in Russia. Many of them, notably P. L. Lavrov, H. A. Lopatin, N. F. Danielson, S. M. Stepnyak-Kravchinsky, and N. A. Morozov, knew Marx and Engels personally, corresponded with them, and thought highly of various aspects of their world-view.³ But they believed that the Marxist teaching was applicable only to the Western countries, and used

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 26.

² Engels an Minna Karlowna Gorbunowa, 22. Juli 1880, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 34, S. 449.

³ S. S. Volk, *Karl Marx and Russian Civic Leaders*, Leningrad, 1969; R. Konyushaya, *Karl Marx and Revolutionary Russia*, Moscow, 1975 (both in Russian).

the works of Marx and Engels primarily as material for exposing the capitalist system, losing sight of the main points contained in them. Nonetheless, the Narodniks of the 1870s did much to popularise some of the works of Marx and Engels in Russia. In the early 1880s Marx was able to write: "Some recent Russian publications, printed in Holy Russia, not abroad, show the great run of my theories in that country. Nowhere my success is to me more delightful..."¹

By this time the situation had begun to change drastically: first real followers of Marx and Engels began to appear in Russia and these broke with Narodism. There were two immediate reasons for this. First, socio-economic development in Russia had shown that capitalism was making steady headway. The spontaneous working-class movement was spreading, strikes were becoming more and more frequent, and the first proletarian organisations were being set up. Second, Marxism had finally prevailed over all the other socialist doctrines in Western Europe. Further, as Lenin pointed out, "thanks to the political emigration caused by tsarism, revolutionary Russia, in the second half of the nineteenth century, acquired a wealth of international links and excellent information on the forms and theories of the world revolutionary movement, such as no other country possessed".² Little wonder, therefore, that during the reign of Alexander III the first major steps were taken in Russia towards the assimilation of the only true theory of socialism and towards its application to the conditions obtaining in Russia. "It was in that period," Lenin wrote, "that Russian revolutionary thought worked hardest, and laid the groundwork for the Social-Democratic world-outlook."³ Here an outstanding role was played by G. V. Plekhanov.

He began his revolutionary career in the Narodnik movement. But when the Narodnaya Volya went over to individual terror tactics, to which Plekhanov was strongly opposed, he decided to break with the Narodniks. A serious study of the works of Marx and Engels, which he began after his emigration in 1880, and the knowledge he obtained of the working-class movement in West European countries and his acquaintance with leaders of that movement sped up the turn in his world-view.

That he was beginning to steer away from the subjective sociology of Narodism was seen, in particular, in his message of greetings to a secret congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in 1880 on behalf of the editors of the Narodnik *Black Redivision*. "German

¹ Marx and Laura Lafargue, 14. Dezember 1882, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, S. 408.

² V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 26.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 256.

Social-Democracy," the message stated, "has always played an outstanding part in the magnificent struggle being waged under the banner of labour's liberation from capitalist oppression. Its theorists have been the heralds and founders of modern scientific socialism—while its organisation and the solidarity and discipline always implicit in it have, on the one hand, served as an example for the Socialists of other countries and, on the other, have long been sowing fear and consternation among the international bourgeoisie.

"Your friends and your enemies alike are well aware that this is an international struggle, and your Party's every success therefore instils hope and joy in the hearts of your friends... The Russian Socialists have not been indifferent onlookers in this struggle. Constantly concerned with how to repulse harassment from one of the most reactionary governments and compelled to adjust their work to the specific conditions to their country, the Russian Socialists have nevertheless always been aware that by and large their aims coincide with those of the Socialists of all civilised nations."¹

The tendency towards a rupture with Narodnik illusions and a gravitation towards Marxism thus gathered strength among the revolutionary Narodniks, chiefly among those grouped around the Black Redivision.²

Plekhanov's large contribution to the Russian and international working-class movement during the first two decades of his work as a Marxist was noted time and again by Lenin. In a situation in which he had almost single-handedly to oppose his comrades of yesterday, he displayed great courage and commitment. The Emancipation of Labour group, founded by him (it was joined by the former Narodniks V. I. Zasulich, P. B. Axelrod, L. G. Deitch, and V. N. Ignatov), initiated the ideological preparations for the formation of a workers' party in Russia.

The basic aims of the Emancipation of Labour group were 1) to spread the ideas of scientific socialism by translating into Russian works by Marx and Engels and also by their followers; 2) to expose the views predominant in the Russian liberation movement and for-

¹ *The Philosophical and Literary Legacy of G. V. Plekhanov*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1973, p. 317 (in Russian).

² That this was a more general tendency is seen from the programme documents of the group to which A. I. Ulyanov belonged. They stated that the group's differences with the Social-Democrats were "very minor". Although in fact this was not the case (for instance, in the question of terror as a weapon of the liberation movement), some of the group's programme provisions were formulated under the influence of Marxism. A. I. Ulyanov declared that it was desirable to unite with the Social-Democrats for a common assault on the autocracy (*Alexander Ilyich Ulyanov and The Case of March 1, 1887*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927 [in Russian]).

mulate the key issues of Russian society from the angle of scientific socialism and in accordance with the interests of the nation's working classes.¹

Plekhanov began his criticism of Narodnik ideology with the work *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, published in the first issue of the *Library of Modern Socialism* that was started by the Emancipation of Labour group in 1883. This could not have been more topical on account of the Narodniks' persevering efforts to draw a line between socialism and the political struggle. Lenin subsequently wrote very highly of Plekhanov's work in this area. "The first *profession de foi* of world socialism, the *Communist Manifesto*," he wrote, "established a truth that has since become an elementary verity—... that the working-class movement only then grows out of its embryonic state, its infancy, and becomes a *class* movement when it makes the transition to the political struggle. The first *profession de foi* of Russian Social-Democracy, Plekhanov's booklet, *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, which appeared in 1883, reaffirmed this elementary truth in its application to Russia and showed precisely how and why the Russian revolutionary movement must bring about a fusion of socialism and the political struggle, a fusion of the spontaneous movement of the masses of workers and the revolutionary movement, a fusion of the class struggle and the political struggle."²

In his very first Marxist writings Plekhanov "pointed out the task of the Russian revolutionaries—the foundation of a revolutionary working-class party".³ But this required enormous preparatory work. In the 1880s and during the first half of the 1890s this work fell mainly to Plekhanov and his associates in the Emancipation of Labour group. In this period they published a few dozen translations and original works on the most pressing problems of the international and Russian liberation movement. Widely disseminated in Russia, these works helped progressive workers, intellectuals, and young people to assimilate Marxism.⁴

In *Our Differences*, *On the Development of the Monistic View of History*, *On the Role of the Individual in History*, and many other works Plekhanov attacked the subjective method in sociology and showed why Narodnik ideology was in general untenable. Lenin frequently drew on these works in his condemnations of the Narodniks. In replying, in a polemic with them, to the question whether "Russia should go through the capitalist phase of development" Plekhanov,

¹ G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. II, pp. 22-23 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Apropos of the *Profession de Foi*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 287-88.

³ V. I. Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 264.

⁴ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, p. 168.

Lenin wrote, spoke as only a Marxist could speak. "He left aside entirely the question of the 'must', as being an idle one that could be of interest only to subjectivists, and dealt exclusively with real social economic relations and their actual evolution."¹

The work of the Emancipation of Labour group, chiefly of its founder and leader, put Russian emancipatory thought on the world map. Plekhanov became the first Russian revolutionary Marxist to win international recognition. As indicated earlier, many of his works were published abroad and contributed to the development of the Marxist teaching. He never met Marx personally but was the initiator of the request of Russian revolutionaries to Marx and Engels to write a preface for the Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, which Plekhanov himself translated. The preface, dated January 1882, was promptly received: Marx and Engels attached great significance to it. "Russia," they wrote, "forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe."² These words were an inspiration for the militants fighting the hated tsarist regime.

Engels soon saw that the Emancipation of Labour group was a Marxist organisation and closely followed its activities. He felt that the publication of his and Marx's works in the Russian language could be entrusted to no other organisation. "I am proud", he wrote to V. Zasulich in 1885, "to know that there is a party among the youth of Russia which frankly and without equivocation accepts the great economic and historical theories of Marx and has definitely broken with all the anarchist and also the few existing Slavophil traditions of its predecessors. And Marx himself would have been equally proud of this had he lived a little longer. It is an advance which will be of great importance for the revolutionary development of Russia."³

The Emancipation of Labour group's links with Engels became particularly intensive from the end of the 1880s onwards. In the period of direct preparations for the formation of a new International, when it was vital to collect the largest possible number of signatures under the notification on the convocation of a Marxist congress and there were difficulties in getting these signatures from Russian Socialists (Lavrov hesitated at first, and only Stepnyak-Kravchinsky gave his consent), the unconditional approval of the notification by Plekhanov, Zasulich, and Axelrod played a major part. Plekhanov spoke at the 1889 socialist congress in Paris, declaring that "the old economic foundations of Russia are undergoing a process of complete

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 194, 195.

² Marx, Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 14.

³ Engels to Vera Ivanovna Zasulich, April 23, 1885, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 361.

disintegration ... big manufacturing industry is growing". The task of the Russian Social-Democrats was to assimilate the views of contemporary scientific socialism, disseminate them among the workers, and take the fortress of the autocracy by storm. Plekhanov's speech—the first public statement of the Russian Marxists at an international congress—ended with the words: "The revolutionary movement in Russia can triumph only as the revolutionary movement of the workers."¹

After the congress Plekhanov went to London, where for a week he had long conversations with Engels. At the Zurich congress of the Second International he was entrusted with the delivery of an important report on militarism. At this congress and then in 1894 in London Plekhanov and Zasulich became close friends of Engels'. When there was a resurgence of anarchist activity at this period, the German Social-Democrats asked Plekhanov to write a book on this subject under the title *Anarchism and Socialism*. It was published in 1894 and was translated into almost all the European languages (its shortcomings in the treatment of the question of the state did not attract attention at the time; they were pointed out later by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*).

The way for the spread and consolidation of the ideas of scientific socialism in Russia's liberation movement and for the activities of the Emancipation of Labour group was cleared chiefly because the numerical strength of the Social-Democrats grew steadily in the 1880s and especially in the early 1890s. Marxist study circles and groups sprang up in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, and Warsaw, and Marxism began to spread quickly among advanced workers. The ground for this was prepared by objective Russian reality, particularly by the growth of the working-class movement.

In the 1880s the most notable Social-Democratic organisations in Russia were the Blagoev group and the Tochissky circle in St. Petersburg, and the circles headed by N. Y. Fedoseyev in Kazan.²

The Blagoev group was formed in 1883, almost simultaneously with the Emancipation of Labour group (in 1884 it became the first in Russia to call itself a party of Russian Social-Democrats).³ Its programme was, on the whole, Marxist despite an admixture of Lassalleian ideas. Correspondence with the Emancipation of Labour group on programme issues strongly influenced the further theoretical growth of the Blagoev group and, in turn, helped G. V. Plekhanov

¹ Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works* in five volumes, Vol. I, p. 399.

² *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, pp. 142-253.

³ D. Blagoev, *My Recollections*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1928, p. 37 (in Russian).

to make significant improvements in the second draft Social-Democratic programme.

Blagoev and his associates saw the dissemination of Social-Democratic ideas among workers as their principal aim; they conducted this work among the workers of St. Petersburg's Vasilyevsky Ostrov, Nevskaya Zastava, and the Petersburg and Vyborg districts. The publication of this group's newspaper *Rabochy* was a major event in the revolutionary movement in the mid-1880s. This was the first attempt to start a Social-Democratic workers' press in Russia.

Another Social-Democratic organisation, the Tochissky group (Association of St. Petersburg Skilled Workers), was formed in St. Petersburg in 1885 independently of the Blagoev group. With N. Vasilyev, E. A. Klimanov (Afanasyev), V. A. Shelgunov, V. V. Buyanov, I. I. Timofeyev, and other advanced workers as its members, it began disseminating Marxist ideas at the biggest factories in St. Petersburg: the Alexandrov, Obukhov, and Baltic factories, the Arsenal, and the Laferm tobacco factory, to name a few.

The turn towards Marxism in Russia at the time, Lenin noted, was largely due to the influence of N. Y. Fedoseyev, whom he characterised as an "exceptionally talented and exceptionally devoted revolutionary".¹ The core of the central Fedoseyev circle in Kazan took shape in 1887-1888, and a number of other groups formed around it.

The base of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia expanded dramatically at the close of the 1880s and in the early 1890s. A growing number of Marxist study circles and groups began attempting to forge links to the working-class movement. One of the most influential of these functioned in St. Petersburg with M. I. Brusnev at its head. It was formed in 1889 through a merger of several student groups and included G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, V. V. Starkov, A. L. Malchenko, and N. K. Krupskaya, who were later to be associated with Lenin in the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. Among its activists were some workers who had earlier belonged to the Association of St. Petersburg Skilled Workers.

By 1890 more than 20 workers' circles had formed around the central workers' and the central intellectuals' groups. These were active in almost all the districts of St. Petersburg. The main purpose of the St. Petersburg Marxist group was, M. I. Brusnev recalls, to mould the members of these study circles "into developed and politically conscious Social-Democrats who could replace intellectual propagandists in everything".²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Few Words About N. Y. Fedoseyev", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 453.

² *The Working-Class Movement in 19th-Century Russia*, Vol. III, Part 2, Moscow, 1952, pp. 106-07.

A vivid page in the history of the Brusnev organisation was the attendance of nearly a hundred of its members at the funeral in 1891 of N. V. Shelgunov, a well-known publicist and member of the revolutionary-democratic wing of the Russian liberation movement. This funeral was turned into a political demonstration. Members of the Brusnev group organised the first May Day celebrations in Russia mentioned earlier. "The Brusnev group propagated Marxism among a small segment of advanced workers. It was, nevertheless, the largest and the most active Social-Democratic organisation of those years. In educating Social-Democratic workers and organising proletarian political actions, this group made the first attempts to draw close to the working-class movement."¹

In the 1880s-1890s a fierce ideological struggle raged in the Russian liberation movement over the quest for a correct revolutionary theory. It was, to quote Lenin, the embryonic period of Marxism's development in Russia, when it had to prove that it was applicable in the difficult conditions of Russian reality. But in Russia this period was much shorter than in Western Europe. By the mid-1890s Marxism "had already won over to its side the majority of the revolutionary youth in Russia".² But this did not mean that scientific socialism had triumphed in the Russian liberation movement. "The Emancipation of Labour group only laid the theoretical foundations for the Social-Democratic movement and took the first step towards the working-class movement."³ Narodism was still to be extirpated and there was still no clarity on the basic questions of the Russian revolution, including the motive forces at its different stages, the attitude to the peasants, the ways and means of linking socialism to the working-class movement, and the principles underlying the structure of the proletarian party. These questions were resolved on the theoretical level and the struggle for their practical implementation was headed by Lenin.

THE FIRST YEARS OF LENIN'S WORK. THE ST. PETERSBURG LEAGUE OF STRUGGLE FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

In the mid-1890s the liberation movement in Russia entered its new, proletarian phase. The workers' movement in protest against the unbearable conditions of life and work was beginning to broaden, and their struggle against exploitation and denial of rights was growing more massive and organised. Russian Social-Democracy

¹ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. I, p. 162.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 376.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Ideological Struggle in the Working-Class Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 278.

appeared on the scene "as a social movement, as the upsurge of the masses of the people, as a political party".¹ This transition of the movement to a higher stage, predicated by new processes in Russia's socio-economic life at the close of the nineteenth century, was indivisibly linked with the militant revolutionary work of V. I. Ulyanov-Lenin, who played an inestimable role in the development of not only the Russian but also the world liberation movement.

Lenin's formation as a proletarian revolutionary was largely influenced by the family and socio-political environment of his childhood and youth. In the Ulyanov family there was an atmosphere of profound respect for the finest democratic traditions of Russian culture, notably for its revolutionary stream associated with the names of Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, and Pisarev. In this atmosphere Lenin early saw the inequities of the order prevailing in Russia and realised that society had to be radically restructured. Narodism's collapse as an ideology and practical liberation struggle made young revolutionaries sharply aware of the need for new, effective ways of struggle against the inequitable social system. This was understood and felt very strongly by Lenin. His decision to follow the road charted by Marx and Engels was motivated not only by the growing disappointment of young people with Narodism and the growing general interest in Marxism but also by the tragic fate of his older brother, Alexander Ilyich Ulyanov, who was executed in May 1887 for his involvement in an attempt to assassinate Alexander III.

The conclusion that was drawn by the then 17-year-old Vladimir Ulyanov from his brother's execution was: "We shall definitely not follow that road. This is not the road for us."² Lenin began studying Marxism seriously in 1888, giving painstaking attention to Marx's *Capital*. He then joined one of the Marxist study circles organised in Kazan by N. Y. Fedoseyev.

During the next few years, which were the Samara period of his life and work (1889-1893), his study of the theory of Marxism became more profound and meaningful. He went through *The Poverty of Philosophy*, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, *Anti-Dühring*, and all the other works of Marx and Engels available in the provincial town of Samara. Also, he attempted to apply Marx's methodology of research into social phenomena to Russian realities. Here, as the struggle against the delusions of the Narodnik ideologists required, he gave much of his attention to tracing the development of the post-reform Russian countryside: he dug into agricultural statistics and literature on the economy of the Russian countryside, and critically read works

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 517.

² *Reminiscences About V. I. Lenin*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1968, p. 144 (in Russian).

by Narodnik economists: V. P. Vorontsov, N. F. Danielson, N. A. Karyshev, and S. N. Yuzhakov.

The first results of this study were expounded by Lenin in an article headed "New Economic Developments in Peasant Life. On V. Y. Postnikov's *Peasant Farming in South Russia*".¹ Written in the spring of 1893 this article showed how far Lenin had advanced in researching the central processes in Russia's economy at the close of the nineteenth century. By analysing the many facts given in Postnikov's book and comparing them with statistics in other sources Lenin was able to prove the "bourgeois nature of the economic relationships existing among the peasantry", that there were antagonistic strata in it,² and that it would be futile to hope that the commune would remain stable in the face of the growth and spread of capitalism. Thereby, on the basis of a careful analysis of Russian reality, he convincingly confirmed Marxism's proposition that all hopes for social progress had to be linked with the working class.

In addition to researching the trends of socio-economic development in Russia, Lenin closely studied the theoretical and practical work of the Social-Democratic parties of West European countries. His attention was attracted mainly by the German Social-Democratic Party, the most authoritative at the time, whose experience was of special interest to the young working-class movement of Russia, for that party had successfully combined legal and secret methods of struggle during the period the Anti-Socialist Law was in operation. Lenin got his information about European workers' organisations chiefly from *Neue Zeit*, the theoretical journal of the SDPG.

He saw the general principles of Marxism as the immutable foundation for the development of revolutionary theory on an international scale. A distinctive feature of the revolutionary process is its unity, and he therefore highly valued the accumulated experience of struggle. But to apply this experience did not mean imitating it; application had to be creative. Lenin wrote at the close of the 1890s: "The history of socialism and democracy in Western Europe, the history of the Russian revolutionary movement, the experience of our working-class movement—such is the *material* we must master to elaborate a purposeful organisation and purposeful tactics for our Party. 'The analysis' of this material must, however, be done independently, since there are no ready-made models to be found anywhere."³

¹ V. I. Lenin, "New Economic Developments in Peasant Life", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 11-69.

² V. I. Lenin, "To P. P. Maslov", *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, pp. 37-40.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Our Immediate Task", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 217.

Available experience did not and could not provide a conclusive answer to the questions that the revolutionary movement in Russia found itself faced with during the closing decade of the nineteenth century. The Russian Marxists had to find ways of turning the then tiny Social-Democratic movement into the political vanguard of the working class of Russia. While minutely studying Marxist theory, Lenin tried to draw into this work the then small stratum of revolutionary young people in Samara, propagated Marxism, and showed the hollowness of Narodnik ideas that Russia had its "own" road to socialism. In 1892 he organised the first Marxist group in Samara.¹ But in that city the conditions were lacking for Social-Democratic activity on a scale for which Lenin was by now fully prepared. This induced him to go to St. Petersburg, where the situation was most conducive for resolving the fundamental problems of the working-class movement.

Although surveillance was particularly strict there, St. Petersburg had, more than any other Russian city, matured for mustering the scattered Social-Democratic forces and merging scientific socialism with the mass working-class movement. Not only were there large numbers of workers in the city, but among them there was a high percentage of hereditary proletarians, there were many engineering and metalworking factories with a large proportion of skilled and literate workers prepared to accept Social-Democratic ideas. Further, the rate of capitalist exploitation was much higher in St. Petersburg than anywhere else in Russia. It was not surprising that there were strong traditions of protest against the difficult working and living conditions, including strike traditions.

Also there were the strongest traditions of revolutionary, including Social-Democratic, propaganda among the workers. True, in 1893, when Lenin went to St. Petersburg, the local Social-Democrats had not yet entirely recovered from the break-up of the Brusnev group in the previous year. Nevertheless, there were a number of functioning revolutionary groups, the largest of which was the "group of technologists" (most of its members were students of the Technological Institute) that was formed by S. I. Radchenko, a member of the Brusnev organisation who had escaped arrest. It was highly significant that this group took over many of the links with workers, including with such well-known revolutionaries as V. A. Shelgunov, K. Norinsky, and V. Fomin.

The St. Petersburg period of Lenin's work lasted only a little more than two years, up to December 1895, when he and many of his underground associates were arrested by the tsarist police. But this was an

¹ *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. A Biographical Chronicle*, Vol. 1, 1870-1905, Moscow, 1970, p. 71 (in Russian).

extremely eventful and productive period. The main results of the work conducted by him and his associates during these two years were that they considerably extended the scale of Marxist propaganda and ideologically crushed Narodism; from propaganda in study groups they went over to agitation among the worker masses; the Social-Democratic League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was set up and under its leadership there was an unparalleled growth of the mass working-class movement in St. Petersburg in 1895-1896.

In October 1893 Lenin joined the "group of technologists". It was soon found that even this group, which was strongest in composition (in addition to S. I. Radchenko, it included M. A. Silvin, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, and V. V. Starkov) and for its links to advanced proletarians, no longer met the requirements of the day. Its activities boiled down to, as Lenin put it, "very heavy and academic"¹ propaganda. The inadequacy of this propaganda was felt by the group's members themselves. But they could not break out of their habitual range of ideas. Lenin's entry into the group gave a fresh impetus to its activities. It gradually widened its programme, gearing it to the main task of linking the spontaneous movement to scientific socialism and taking over the leadership of the working-class struggle against exploitation and denial of rights.

A meeting at the close of November 1893, at which G. B. Krasin presented a paper on "The Question of Markets", was a turning point in the group's history. This was the question on which the spokesmen of Narodism tried to strike a blow at Marxism with the contention that it was inapplicable in Russia. Their principal arguments were that capitalism allegedly had no scope for development in Russia and that the narrowness of the external and, especially, the internal market was dooming it to stagnation and retreat. Krasin disputed these arguments much too abstractly and, on top of everything, there were some methodological errors in his constructions. Lenin's criticism of Krasin's paper made an indelible impression. This criticism showed that Lenin had a thorough knowledge of Marx's *Capital* and that he was able to analyse economic problems with Marx's methodology as his point of departure, and to use an analysis of what was at first glance an academic question for conclusions concerning the practical tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats.²

Lenin was aware that socialism's merger with the working class movement would be effective only if an end was put to the Narodnik ideological influence among the workers. By the mid-1890s the Na-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Plan for an Article '1895 and 1905 (Short Parallel)'" , *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 137.

² M. A. Silvin, *Lenin in the Party's Formative Period. Reminiscences*, Leningrad, 1958, p. 44 (in Russian).

rodniks had little in common with their revolutionary predecessors. "Narodism," Lenin wrote, "which in the past had positively rejected bourgeois liberalism, began gradually to merge with the latter in a single liberal-Narodist trend."¹ From the Narodnik programme of the 1870s, which to some extent had mirrored the militant democratism of the peasantry seeking the total abolition of landowner oppression, "there has emerged a programme calculated to patch up, to 'improve' the conditions of the peasantry while preserving the foundations of modern society".² It is symbolic that Engels had perspicaciously foreseen the possibility of this evolution: in a letter to Plekhanov he wrote that when the Narodnik, the former terrorist, saw the crumbling of his hopes he would quite likely "end up by becoming an advocate of tsarism".³

That was exactly what happened, and the objective cause of this evolution, as Lenin pointed out, was the development of capitalism, which accelerated the stratification of the peasantry and turned the ideologues of peasant socialism into spokesmen of the interests of the petty bourgeoisie—of those of its interests that had nothing to do with socialism: more, of those that were in conflict with it. "Once progressive, as the first to pose the problem of capitalism", Lenin pointed out, "nowadays Narodism is a *reactionary* and *harmful* theory."⁴

By the mid-1890s, when Mikhailovsky, Vorontsov, Krivenko, and other liberal Narodnik leaders were disturbed by their waning influence and began a virulent slander campaign against Marxism, it had become especially vital to consummate the ideological defeat inflicted on Narodism by Plekhanov.

The Marxists had to move beyond noting the fact that capitalism had come to Russia. They had to show the laws governing its development in Russia and, above all, the social consequences of this process. Lenin's speech at the above-mentioned meeting of the St. Petersburg group was only the first step in that direction. He soon enlarged upon his comments in a paper "On the So-Called Market Ques-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Working-Class and Bourgeois Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 72-73.

² V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 264, 265.

³ Engels an Georgi Walentinowitsch Plechanow, 26. Februar 1895, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, S. 417. In the afterword to his "On the Social Relations in Russia", Engels noted that "There continues this accelerated transformation of Russia into an industrial capitalist state". He was emphatic on the point that the Russian revolution "will ... give a fresh impulse to the labour movement in the West, creating for it new and better conditions for struggle". Frederick Engels, "On Social Relations in Russia", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, pp. 409, 410.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "The Heritage We Renounce", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 516.

tion"¹, which he read at the group's next meeting. In this paper he deepened and amplified his arguments against the Narodniks. In manuscript form this paper was circulated among Social-Democrats in St. Petersburg and in some other cities, where it had made a profound impression because in it the question of markets was "formulated succinctly and linked to the interests of the people" and "there was the feel of living Marxism in the approach to the question".²

Since the legal press was filled with the complacent arguments of the spokesmen of liberal Narodism about the inapplicability of the Marxist teaching in Russia and also with articles vulgarising or simply distorting the essence of Marxism (particular zeal in this respect was shown by the journal *Russkoye bogatstvo* that was run by S. N. Krivenko and N. K. Mikhailovsky), it became a pressing task of the Russian Marxists to develop a critique of Narodism that could be widely disseminated in revolutionary circles.

This task was undertaken by Lenin. By the summer of 1894 he had written a fundamental work, *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats (A Reply to Articles in "Russkoye bogatstvo" Opposing the Marxists)*³, which was published in three instalments with the help of his new St. Petersburg friends (notably A. A. Vaneyev) and the Moscow Social-Democrat A. A. Ganshin.

The poor printing facilities (the hectograph could produce not more than 50 copies) were the main reason for the small edition.⁴ However, this book reached a wide readership (in addition to St. Petersburg, it was circulated in Moscow, Chernigov, Poltava, Vladimir, Penza, Rostov-on-Don, Kiev, Tomsk, and other cities), was hailed by the Social-Democrats, and "was for a long time a militant instrument of underground propaganda".⁵ It owed its success to the fact that its well-argued criticism of Narodnik ideology was reinforced by a creative amplification of some key propositions of Marxism.

In the first instalment of this work Lenin substantiated the materialist understanding of history in response to the attempts of one of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the So-Called Market Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 75-122.

² N. K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Moscow, 1957, p. 10 (in Russian).

³ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 129-32.

⁴ *Chronological Index of the Works of V. I. Lenin*, Part 2, 1886-February 1917, Moscow, 1959, p. 11; R. Peresvetov, *Search for an Invaluable Legacy (The Destiny of Some of Lenin's Manuscripts)*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 5-18 (both in Russian).

⁵ M. I. Kalinin, *On Lenin's Work "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats"*, Moscow, 1952, p. 20 (in Russian).

the Narodnik leaders, N. K. Mikhailovsky, to "refute" this understanding with subjectivist concepts of social development. Convin-
cingly showing that Mikhailovsky's arguments were a jumble of
sophistry, idealistic truisms, and the most bare-faced vulgarisms,
Lenin countered them with the fundamentals of the teaching of Marx
and Engels, that made it possible "to proceed from a description of
... social phenomena to their strictly scientific analysis"¹, to a study
of the entire sum of these phenomena.

He picked apart the attempts of the liberal Narodniks to vulgarise
Marx's teaching, to identify it with "economic materialism", and
equate the Marxian method to that of Hegel. He demonstrated the
hollowness of the subjective idealism of Mikhailovsky and his asso-
ciates and their exaggeration, in explaining social phenomena, of
the role played by personalities in history, proving that this expla-
nation could only be given by the Marxist teaching, which proceed-
ed from the primacy of objective factors and their complex, dialect-
ical interaction with subjective factors (one of which is the activity
of historical individuals).

The Marxists base their teaching (and their activities) not on wish-
ful thinking but on a sober analysis of reality, on research into the
laws governing the historical process. Because capitalist development
creates the objective conditions for the social revolution, for the Rus-
sian Marxists it was a progressive development although they realised
that it was bringing enormous suffering to the working people,
particularly in a backward country like Russia. The practical pro-
gramme of the Russian Marxists, Lenin wrote, had to be drawn up
accordingly: to take part in the movement of the new social force
created by capitalism—the working class, "helping to develop the
class-consciousness of the proletariat by organising and uniting it
for the political struggle against the present regime".²

The third instalment³ contains a critical analysis of the liberal
Narodniks' political programme and tactics. "Examine this program-
me," he wrote, "and you will find that these gentlemen wholly and
completely adopt the position of modern society (i.e., that of the ca-
pitalist system, without realising it), and want to settle matters
by mending and patching it up, failing to understand that all their
progressive measures—cheap credit, improved machinery, banks,
and so on—can only serve to strengthen and develop the petty-bour-
geoisie."⁴

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight
the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 140.

² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

³ The second instalment has not been found.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight
the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 238.

By exposing the loyalist views and demands of the Narodniks of the 1890s Lenin struck a crushing blow at them. But, unlike Plekhanov, he did not entirely write off Narodism, seeing not only reactionary but also progressive elements in the petty-bourgeois ideology of the Narodniks. "While denying that these theories are in any way socialist in character," he noted, "and while combating their reactionary aspects we should not forget their democratic side." In considering the ensuing task, he stressed that "it is the direct duty of the working class to fight side by side with radical democracy against absolutism and the reactionary social estates and institutions—a duty which the Social-Democrats must impress upon the workers, while not for a moment ceasing also to impress upon them that the struggle against all these institutions is necessary only as a means of facilitating the struggle against the bourgeoisie".¹

Returning to this theme when he was able to draw upon the lessons of the first Russian revolution, Lenin wrote that "the Marxists must carefully extract the sound and valuable kernel of the sincere, resolute, militant democracy of the peasant masses from the husk of Narodnik utopias".² These were propositions of inestimable importance because social thought such as that of the Narodniks and the class relations expressed by them were by no means an exclusively Russian phenomenon. Lenin foresaw that democratic movements, especially in countries with a numerically large petty bourgeoisie, could acquire forms akin to Russian Narodism.³

Plekhanov's attitude in this question was determined by his lack of faith in the revolutionary potentialities of the peasants. This influenced the second draft programme of the Russian Social-Democrats, drawn up by him, which contained the following assertion: "The main bulwark of absolutism is precisely the political indifference and intellectual backwardness of the peasantry."⁴ Here was the embryo of the future fundamental disagreements between Lenin and Plekhanov on cardinal issues of the revolution.

Lenin's book, whose direct aim was to expose liberal Narodism—in those years it was one of the main impediments to scientific socialism's fusion with the working-class movement—thus became a comprehensive action programme of the Russian Marxists. It formulated the basic ideas of the struggle for proletarian leadership of the democratic revolution, ideas founded on an analysis of the alignment of class forces in Russia in the 1890s: this alignment differed substan-

¹ Ibid., pp. 288, 291.

² V. I. Lenin, "Two Utopias", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 359

³ *Lenin's Struggle Against Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionary Rhetoric and Adventurism*, Moscow, 1966, p. 16 (in Russian).

⁴ Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works* in five volumes, Vol. I, p. 359.

tially from the alignments during the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth through the first half of the nineteenth century in Western Europe. In the latter period the bourgeoisie was still a revolutionary force and therefore had the possibility of assuming the leadership: subsequently, it lost much of its revolutionary potential. By the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century the bourgeoisie in developed capitalist countries (to which Russia, too, was drawing close) had lost all its revolutionary spirit. In Russia, Lenin noted, capital "is particularly inclined to sacrifice its democracy and to enter into alliance with the reactionaries in order to still further impede the emergence of a working-class movement."¹

On this question Lenin soon encountered incomprehension and even opposition among such prestigious Marxists of those days as Plekhanov and the entire Emancipation of Labour group. Plekhanov stuck to the customary pattern of the bourgeois revolution and, accordingly, believed that growing strong economically but denied political influence the Russian liberal bourgeoisie was capable of conducting a revolutionary struggle against the autocracy. A crucial element of this thinking was its underestimation of the revolutionary potentialities of the Russian peasantry, which, Plekhanov estimated, would at best be neutral. By steadily developing his conception on this vital issue to the Russian revolution, Lenin came forward as the trail-blazer.

In *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* and subsequent works he not only proved that the Russian bourgeoisie was reactionary but demonstrated that its interests would increasingly differ from those of the bulk of the peasants.² With this objective process as their point of departure, the Russian Social-Democrats had to identify the true substance of the liberal bourgeoisie and help to isolate it politically. An issue cardinal to Russia's historical development—that of which class was to lead the increasingly imminent revolution (the bourgeoisie or the proletariat)—was being resolved in a sharp ideological struggle.

The programme drafted by Lenin for the Russian Marxists was incisively expressed in the famous concluding words of the third instalment of this work: "It is on the working class that the Social-Democrats concentrated all their attention and all their activities. When its advanced representatives have mastered the ideas of scientific socialism, the idea of the historical role of the Russian worker, when these ideas become widespread and when stable organisations are formed ... then the Russian WORKER, rising at the head of all de-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 291-92.

² This is analysed in N. B. Gertman, *Problems of the Working-Class Alliance with the Peasants in Lenin's Works of the 1890s*, Moscow, 1960 (in Russian).

democratic elements will overthrow absolutism and lead the RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT (side by side with the proletariat of ALL COUNTRIES) *along the straight road of open political struggle to THE VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION*".¹

In the struggle against Narodism Lenin and his associates cooperated for some time with the "legal Marxists", who called themselves followers of Marx and popularised some of his ideas in the press (in fact, they were bourgeois democrats, and what attracted them most in Marx's teaching was the postulate that capitalism was a more progressive system than feudalism). This cooperation gave the revolutionary Marxists access to legal publications, a factor of no little significance in the situation prevailing at the time. Lenin regarded cooperation with the "legal Marxists"—Struve and others—as "the first really political alliance entered into by Russian Social-Democrats".² But while cooperating with them Lenin from the outset reserved the right to critically analyse their views. This is seen strikingly in his *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book*,³ that was meant for publication in a joint volume under the heading *Materials for a Characterisation of Our Economic Development*. The volume was to be brought out legally, but after it was printed in 1895 the authorities—on account of Lenin's article—banned it, and only about a hundred copies were circulated.

In this article Lenin continued his criticism of Narodism, analysing in more details the duality of its ideology. This was necessitated, in particular, by the faulty assessment of Narodism in the works of the "legal Marxists". For instance, in *Critical Remarks on the Question of Russia's Economic Development* (1894) Struve identified Narodism with Slavophilism, maintaining that even the revolutionary Narodniks had not put forward democratic demands reflecting the basic interests of the peasants. In contrast, Lenin emphasised that "the Marxists, while rejecting all the reactionary features of their (Narodniks') programme, must not only accept the general democratic points, but carry them through more exactly, deeply and further".⁴

Lenin criticised not only Struve's views about Narodism but also the very foundations of the ideas expounded by the "legal Marxists", which he characterised as a "reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature". Struve and his associates sought to adjust the Marxist teaching to the requirements of the liberal bourgeoisie, to divest it of its

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 300.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 362.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 333-509.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 504.

revolutionary content. In showing this, Lenin brought to light Struve's attempts to disprove the Marxist view of the state with the assertion that the state was a supra-class institution and to compel the Marxists to acknowledge the "equality" of various world-views, including the Malthusian approach to the agrarian question.

Lenin's exposure of the essence of "legal Marxism" touched off the steadfast struggle of the Russian Marxists against right opportunism, which for its historic significance had ranged beyond Russia. Later Lenin wrote: "Struvism is not merely a Russian, but ... an international striving on the part of the bourgeois theoreticians to kill Marxism with 'kindness', to crush it in their embraces, kill it with a feigned acceptance of 'all' and 'truly scientific' aspects and elements of Marxism *except* its 'agitational' ... aspect."¹ He rejected the claims of the "legal Marxists" that they were critically developing Marxism² (in this they anticipated the revisionism of Bernstein).

The possibilities for the revolutionary Social-Democrats, headed by Lenin, cooperating legally with the "legal Marxists" against the Narodniks were narrowing on account of censor harassment; in the meantime the gulf between the views and aims of the two sides grew wider. By 1902 Struve was asserting that "one could be a Marxist without being a Socialist".³ And ten years later he conceded: "In fact, in the persons of Ulyanov-Lenin and myself, two irreconcilable conceptions came to a clash—irreconcilable morally, as well as politically and socially."⁴

Lenin's article *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book* attracted the attention of the Emancipation of Labour group members, who had been living abroad for a long time. It was precisely at this time that Plekhanov was able to have one of his most brilliant works, *The Development of the Monist View of History*, published legally (under the pen name N. Bel'tov) in St. Petersburg: in this work he mercilessly castigated the fundamentally idealistic philosophy of Narodism. He and his associates welcomed the appearance in the ranks of the Russian Marxists of a person who was consistently and profoundly showing that Narodism was essentially a petty-bourgeois ideology and policy, that its right wing was degenerating in the direction of bourgeois liberalism.

However, Plekhanov's opinion of the "legal Marxists" did not entirely dovetail with Lenin's views. For instance, he regarded Stru-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 222.

² V. I. Lenin, "Apropos of an Anniversary", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 113.

³ P. Struve, *On Various Subjects. A Collection of Essays*, St. Petersburg, 1902, p. 69 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. XII, No. 36, April 1934, p. 584.

ve's call to "go into training by capitalism" as an unfortunate turn of phrase.¹ A similar view was held by Y. O. Tsederbaum (who later became one of the Menshevik leaders and was known by the pseudonym L. Martov), who assessed Struve's book, which Lenin had criticised, as "the first systematic exposition of the symbol of faith of the Marxists in the legal press". All the more significant then were Lenin's warnings and his principled, deeply scientific criticism of the first opportunist trend in Russia.

"These literary activities of the Russian Marxists," he later wrote, "were the direct forerunners of active proletarian struggle, of the famous St. Petersburg strikes of 1896, which ushered in an era of the steadily mounting workers' movement."² This historic shift took place under the impact and with the direct participation of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, an organisation of Social-Democrats founded by Lenin. A factor of special significance was its switch from propaganda in workers' study circles to agitation among the worker masses. The groundwork for this switch was laid "on the one hand, by socialist thought..., and on the other, by the profound changes that had taken place in the conditions of life and in the whole mentality of the working class, as well as by the fact that increasingly wider strata of the working class were roused to more conscious and active struggle".³

The call for a transition to agitation and a practical action programme was not speculative, but the result of an in-depth study of the working and living conditions of the St. Petersburg workers, of their preparedness to fight consciously for the satisfaction of vital economic needs, to accept political slogans and democratic demands. Soon after arriving in St. Petersburg Lenin joined in conducting propaganda in workers' study circles beyond the Nevskaya Zastava, a working-class district in the capital. He then conducted active propaganda in study circles attended by workers from factories situated in the Petrograd Storona, the Vyborg Storona, and Kolpino.⁴ He devoted much of his time to talk with workers, asking them about their working conditions, wages, relations with managements, sentiments, reasons for their disaffection, the character and size of fines, their living conditions, and so on.⁵ This gave him and the group of Social-Democrats headed by him information for more substantiated decisions. The conditions were thereby created for a transition

¹ Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works* in five volumes, Vol. I, p. 704.

² V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Collection 'Twelve Years'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 94.

³ V. I. Lenin, "New Tasks and New Forces", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 211.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *A Biographical Chronicle*, Vol. 1, pp. 91, 93, 94.

⁵ *Recollections About Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, Part 3, Moscow, 1961, pp. 22-23 (in Russian).

to agitation among the worker masses as a means of developing a socialist consciousness in them.

Lenin enlisted advanced St. Petersburg workers into criticism of the Narodniks, and many of them "took a personal part in the disputes between the *Narodnaya Volya* adherents and the Social-Democrats that typified the transition of the Russian revolutionary movement from peasant and conspiratorial socialism to working-class socialism".¹ These disputes helped to educate many revolutionary workers from among the members of the workers' Marxist study circles (one of the most outstanding of them was I. V. Babushkin).

The need for Social-Democratic agitation among the masses was discussed in the Group of Technologists as early as the autumn of 1894. But this "did not take place at once, without vacillations, without a struggle".² Some members of the group opposed this change of course. They believed that the very first public actions (agitation could not, of course, be conducted as conspiratorially as propaganda) would lead to the downfall of the entire organisation. Others—the majority led by Lenin—held that the transition to agitation was inevitable if the Social-Democrats really intended to assume the role of organiser and leader of the proletarian class struggle instead of confining themselves to educational activities among workers most prepared to assimilate the ideas of socialism. Without taking this step it would be impossible to merge socialism with the working-class movement. Although this form of work would make arrests more probable, the awakened worker masses would produce more and more militants.³ This question was soon moved from debate to practical actions.

The opportunity for this came with the unrest precipitated on Christmas Eve in 1894 at the Semyannikov (now the Nevsky engineering) works by what by then had become a routine delay in the payment of wages. "It was an occasion made to order and we felt it would be very desirable to try to give agitation a start on this issue"⁴, I. V. Babushkin recalled. A hectographed leaflet was circulated. It stated that the abuses against workers such as those that had caused the unrest would continue until the workers realised they had to unite in order to fight for their rights. The ensuing developments, especially the police interference on the side of the management, gave grounds for the conclusion that the interests of the capitalists and the autocratic state were identical. "Everybody knows," this first

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 250.

² V. I. Lenin, "New Tasks and New Forces", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 211.

³ *Recollections About Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, Part 1, Moscow, 1956, p. 116 (in Russian).

⁴ I. V. Babushkin's *Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1952, pp. 73-74 (in Russian).

leaflet of the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats stated in conclusion, "that the factory owners, the police, and the government are acting at one against us."¹

Soon afterwards, in February 1895, when it was learned that the workers of the New Port were planning a strike, the second leaflet was issued under the heading "What the Port Workers Should Fight For".² Babushkin relates that it "had a greater impact than the leaflet at the Semyannikov works".³

Lenin believed that in going over to agitation the main objective of the Social-Democrats was to develop the political awareness of the workers without waiting for their spontaneous, i.e., passive "maturing". "When we went over to agitation," V. A. Shelgunov recalls, "and some workers began asking for leaflets describing their economic needs, Lenin insisted that economic questions should be raised in such a way as to enable the worker to see that his economic condition would not improve without radical changes in Russia's political life."⁴

Throughout his St. Petersburg period (as during his imprisonment and exile) Lenin pursued this course tirelessly and consistently, denouncing the attempt to reduce Social-Democratic activity to purely economic agitation. He had to take a very strong stand against the deviation toward Economism that was appearing in connection with the circulation of the pamphlet *On Agitation* in Social-Democratic circles in St. Petersburg and other cities in 1894. Alongside "truly useful indications",⁵ to quote Lenin, this pamphlet contained some fundamental deviations from the Marxist postulate that Social-Democracy should be the vanguard of the working-class movement, the organiser and leader of the proletarian class struggle. In particular, there was a serious threat to Russia's young and still weak Social-Democratic movement in the idea that the Marxist circles and groups should concentrate on agitation for the most vital, most easily attainable demands that the workers could quickly appreciate and gradually go over to political demands only when the workers had themselves acquired experience.

¹ *Leaflets of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, 1895-1897*, Moscow, 1934, p. 1 (only the end of this leaflet is extant) [in Russian].

² M. A. Silvin, op. cit., p. 98; *The Working-Class Movement in 19th-Century Russia*, Vol. IV, Part 1, Moscow, 1961, pp. 2-4 (in Russian).

³ I. V. Babushkin's *Reminiscences*, p. 74.

⁴ V. A. Shelgunov, "Recollections About the St. Petersburg Working-Class Movement in the First Half of the 1890s", in *The Old Guard. 30th Anniversary of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, 1895-1925. A Collection of Reminiscences and Documents*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, p. 51 (in Russian).

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 376.

Lenin spoke out all the more forcefully against the opportunist deviation preached in the "Wilno programme" (the pamphlet *On Agitation* was based on the experience of Social-Democratic work in Wilno and other Western cities) because some of its propositions found support among the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats. It was on account of his firmness on this basic issue of the working-class movement that Social-Democratic agitation among the workers of St. Petersburg was from the outset aimed at awakening the political consciousness of the workers. This agitation was particularly active during the closing months of 1895. In the period from October to December alone eight leaflets were printed and distributed among the workers of various industries in St. Petersburg.¹

By their character, designation, and size these were disparate leaflets. A leaflet issued in November 1895 in connection with a strike at the Laferm tobacco factory consisted, for instance, of only a few lines: "Demand the release of all detained workers... Demand higher pay rates... Demand an end to oppression and harassment at the factory... Demand the abolition of the unlawful monthly deduction of 10 kopeks (for the use of lockers, boiling water, and so on)."² Another leaflet, written by Lenin under the heading *To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory*,³ explained why and how the workers should fight for better working and living conditions.

This was a model of agitational literature.⁴ Its distinctive feature was that it showed an accurate knowledge of the situation at the factory where a strike was staged on November 6 (18), 1895, as a result of intensified oppression by the management. It dealt with questions that concerned every worker and for that reason found a responsive chord among the workers when it called for unity and solidarity, for an unrelenting effort to protect the rights granted to the workers by the truncated factory legislation of those days and for better working and living conditions. For this leaflet Lenin used numerous facts about the life of the workers of the textile factory in question.

Under the influence of these leaflets "very soon a veritable passion for exposure was roused among the workers," Lenin wrote later. "As soon as the workers realised that the Social-Democratic

¹ E. A. Korolchuk, "Agitation by the Lenin-Led League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1964, No. 10, pp. 65-66.

² *Leaflets of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class*, p. 12.

³ V. I. Lenin, "To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 81-85.

⁴ This was how it was characterised in a report presented by the Russian Social-Democrats at the London Congress of the Second International in 1896. The same characteristic was given of a leaflet headed *The Workers' May Day Holiday*.

study circles desired to, and could, supply them with a new kind of leaflet that told the whole truth about their miserable existence, about their unbearably hard toil, and their lack of rights, they began to send in, actually flood us with, correspondence from the factories and workshops. This 'exposure literature' created a tremendous sensation, not only in the particular factory exposed in the given leaflet, but in all the factories to which news of the revealed facts spread... Even among the most backward workers, a veritable passion arose to 'get into print'."¹

A leaflet headed *Explanation of the Law on Fines Imposed on Factory Workers*,² also written by Lenin in the autumn of 1895, played a large part in awakening the worker masses. It had a huge edition for those days, especially if it is borne in mind that it was printed clandestinely—nearly 3,000 copies—and found its way to many cities in Russia. It was read by Social-Democratic groups in foreign countries, and received a high evaluation in *Vorwärts*, the central organ of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany.³ "In this pamphlet," N. K. Krupskaya wrote, "Lenin set a brilliant example of how to approach the average worker of the time and, with his needs as the starting point, gradually bring him to the realisation of the need for a political struggle... The workers read it over and over again: it spoke a language they understood and about things that concerned them."⁴

FORMATION OF THE RSDLP

The switch to new forms of Social-Democratic work and, more significantly, the larger scale of this work became possible only because all this was accompanied by a process that led to the formation of a political party of the working class of Russia.

The old, study-circle form of Social-Democratic organisation no longer corresponded to the tasks of the working-class movement. In the spring of 1894 Lenin generalised the work of the Russian Social-Democrats, writing in *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* that the Socialists should help the workers "devise the form of organisation most SUITABLE

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 398.

² V. I. Lenin, "Explanation of the Law on Fines Imposed on Factory Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 29-72.

³ "Pamphlets of this kind..." the newspaper wrote on February 16, 1896, "are a tremendous contribution to the promotion of Social-Democratic consciousness among large segments of the workers."

⁴ N. K. Krupskaya, *Recollections About Lenin*, p. 15.

*under our conditions for disseminating Social-Democratic ideas and welding the workers into a political force."*¹

In the spring of 1895 the group of Social-Democrats headed by Lenin set about forming such an organisation in connection with and under the impact of the switch to mass agitation. The very first steps along this new road required the restructuring of all the work that was being done and a precise assignment of functions. This restructuring had been completed by the autumn of 1895: at that time the Group of Technologists had grown into a fairly large organisation. Its most active members (V. I. Lenin, V. V. Starkov, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, A. A. Vaneyev, P. K. Zaporozhets, N. K. Krupskaya, S. I. Radchenko, and some others) comprised the organisation's central group (in fact, its city committee). The leadership was composed of Lenin, Starkov, and Krzhizhanovsky. Lenin became the editor of all literary publications, Radchenko was charged with maintaining contacts with other Social-Democratic groups, and so on. Moreover, members of the central group were assigned to the main districts; in each of these districts there was a worker-activist, who acted as organiser and maintained contact with the factories. The lower branches consisted of workers' study circles at factories. This resulted in a coherent organisational structure, underlying which were the principles of centralisation, division of functions, discipline, and strict secrecy. In mid-December 1895 the organisation became known as the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, the name by which it entered the history of the Russian and international working-class movement.

Some ten years later Lenin characterised the composition and structure of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle as follows: "10-16 persons (committee). 20-30 workers' circles. Maximum, 100-150 ties."²

The new dimensions and new forms of work required the pooling of efforts with other Marxist, Social-Democratic circles, for the switch to agitation among the workers at once revealed a shortage of cadres for this work. However, in 1895 there was a merger only with the small Martov group, which managed to organise the multiplication of agitational literature on a mimeograph (then a novelty in underground printing). At the same time, it was found that there were negative aspects to this merger because of the ill-advised ideas held by the Martov group. In particular, Lenin had to dispute Martov's view that in order to conduct mass agitation it was necessary to fold up the work of propaganda circles. This would have

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 320.

² V. I. Lenin, "Plan for an Article '1895 and 1905 (Short Parallel)'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 137.

reduced the level of the militant workers' Marxist training and resulted in a lowering of the standard of agitation. Martov's proposal was rejected.

A key feature of the League of Struggle that made it the genuine leader of the worker masses was that it had close links to many factories (including almost all the large factories in St. Petersburg), ties which it had begun establishing as soon as it was formed. In 1894-1895 it was active at 70 factories, 22 of which (there were 25 of this kind) employed up to 1,000 workers each.¹ The League's core consisted of advanced workers, including I. V. Babushkin, B. I. Zinov'yev, V. A. Shelgunov, S. I. Funtikov, and V. A. Knyazev.

The League was not a local organisation in the true sense of the word; to be more exact, local interests and tasks did not obscure or shut out its orientation toward the fulfilment of tasks of national significance. From the very beginning there were many features in the work of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle that justify speaking of it as the embryo Russian Social-Democratic Party.² In particular, it established and maintained contact with Social-Democrats in various parts of Russia and with the Emancipation of Labour group; it organised national publications; it drafted the party programme and produced pamphlets generalising the organisational and agitational experience of the League of Struggle; it established direct links with foreign Social-Democratic parties and tried to use their experience. Lastly, the preparation and conduct of the famous strike of 30,000 St. Petersburg textile workers, which marked a turning point in the working-class movement of Russia, were by no means of local significance.

In the 1890s Moscow was an influential centre of the Social-Democratic movement. A central Social-Democratic group, the so-called sextuplet, which took over the direction of the work of other Marxist groups and study circles, was formed in the city as early as the autumn of 1893. It initially consisted of A. N. and P. I. Vinokurov, S. I. Mitskevich, M. N. Lyadov, Y. I. Sponti, and the worker S. I. Prokofyev; an active part of the group's work was later taken by V. V. Vorovsky, V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, M. F. Vladimirsky, and I. F. Dubrovinsky. The Moscow Social-Democrats formed strong links with advanced workers and conducted Marxist study circles at factories, while in 1894 they likewise began going over to agitation among the worker masses (they published and circulated leaflets headed *A Clash at the Factory Inspectors'* and *A Talk Between Two Factory Owners*). The formation of the Workers' League was the

¹ E. A. Korolchuk, op. cit., p. 65.

² Lenin first referred to the St. Petersburg League of Struggle as the embryo of the party in 1897 ("The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 314-42).

most outstanding event in the working-class and Social-Democratic movement in Moscow in the mid-1890s.

The beginning for this was laid at a meeting in 1894 of representatives of factory study circles. This meeting set up a central workers' circle consisting of advanced workers and Social-Democratic intellectuals. In 1895 it was named the Workers' League. At the height of its activity (summer of 1896) this league was conducting agitation at 55 large factories and in the railway workshops. It had links with Social-Democratic organisations in 15 industrial cities and with the Emancipation of Labour group.¹ Most important, it had fairly durable and regular contacts with the St. Petersburg League of Struggle. Lenin visited Moscow on several occasions and had constant contact with the Moscow Social-Democrats through his sister A. I. Ulyanova-Yelizarova and a number of comrades.²

The Social-Democratic movement spread vigorously in the Central Industrial Region in the mid-1890s. One of the most successful organisations in this region was the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Workers' League, which was formed in the spring of 1895 with the assistance of Moscow Social-Democrats and under the influence of the Lenin-led League of Struggle. Members of this organisation—worker-agitators M. A. Bagayev and N. I. Makhov—headed a strike of 2,000 textile workers at the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Manufactory in October of the same year. Reports about this strike were sent to the newspaper *Rabocheye dyelo*, which was being set up by the St. Petersburg League of Struggle and to the first issue of *Rabotnik*, a collection published abroad. The Ivanovo-Voznesensk Social-Democrats did not confine their work to their city; in the spring of 1897 a Social-Democratic study circle was formed on their initiative in the village of Kokhma, which was a centre of the textile industry in Vladimir Gubernia.³

The Social-Democratic movement grew rapidly in the Ukraine, notably in Kiev, Yekaterinoslav, and Kharkov. The formation, in December 1895, of the Kiev Workers' Committee headed by the revolutionary worker Y. D. Melnikov, was the first step towards the establishment of the Kiev organisation that was one of the initiators of uniting all Social-Democrats in Russia in a single party. The major milestones in the evolution of the Kiev Social-

¹ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, pp. 238-39; *Essays on the History of the Moscow Organisation of the CPSU, 1883-1965*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 20-33 (in Russian).

² E. A. Korolchuk, "The Lenin-Led League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class—Embryo of the Militant Revolutionary Workers' Party," *Voprosy istorii*, No. 1, 1956.

³ *Essays on the History of the Ivanovo Organisation of the CPSU*, Part 1, 1892-1917, Ivanovo, 1963, pp. 48-58.

Democratic groups and study circles in the direction that was most vividly embodied in the mid-1890s by the Lenin-led League of Struggle were the formation (in the spring of 1896) of the *Rabocheye dyelo* group (whose most active members were Y. D. Melnikov, B. A. Eidelman, P. L. Tuchapsky, and N. A. Vigdorchik), the mimeographed workers' newspaper *Vperyod* started by this group, and the merging (in March 1897) of all the Kiev Social-Democratic groups in the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class.

In the mid-1890s the Social-Democrats were also active in the Volga region, the Urals, the Transcaucasus, the Baltic area, Byelorussia, Poland, and Siberia.¹

Some of the organisations and groups that sprang up in those years struck deep roots in the working-class movement, and police repression only temporarily disrupted their activities; others were short-lived and frequently disappeared altogether after the first police raid. But, on the whole, the Social-Democratic movement gathered strength, and it grew increasingly evident that there had to be regular links between the organisations in the various localities and that they had to act in unison and eventually unite in a party.

Personal contacts initially predominated in the movement: these were based on acquaintanceship or joint participation in various study circles, while the purpose of these contacts was mainly to exchange information and literature. The character and content of these contacts gradually changed; coordinated actions by various Social-Democratic organisations acquired growing significance. This was, in particular, the purpose of a conference of representatives of Social-Democratic groups of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, and Wilno that was held in St. Petersburg in February 1895. It discussed ways and means of going over from study circle propaganda to mass agitation and the content and practical purposes of agitation.

The increasingly more regular contacts of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle with Social-Democratic groups in various Russian cities acquired special significance in connection with Lenin's trip abroad in the summer of 1895.² He spent over a month in Switzerland, about a month in Paris, and roughly a month in Berlin. His main purpose was to establish direct contact and cooperation with the Emancipation of Labour group. This was a vital element of the preparations for forming a Marxist workers' party in Russia.

¹ The formation and work of local Social-Democratic organisations in Russia in 1894-1898 are discussed in *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, pp. 234-56, 552-63.

² A detailed account of this trip is given in G. S. Zhuikov, op. cit.; G. S. Ulman, "Lenin Abroad in 1895", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 6, 1973.

Lenin used this trip also for a study of the work of the socialist parties of France and Germany and fill in the gaps in the study of the socialist press and literature, particularly of the works of Marx and Engels unavailable in Russia. In this sense he had useful talks with G. V. Plekhanov and P. B. Axelrod, who were closely linked with leading personalities of the European working-class movement, regularly contributed to various socialist journals, and had attended congresses of the Second International.

In Berlin and Paris he worked in libraries, attended workers' meetings, observed the day-to-day life of workers, and took an interest in how socialist propaganda was organised. In Paris he met Paul Lafargue, and in Berlin he visited Wilhelm Liebknecht, to whom he had a letter of recommendation from Plekhanov.

His meetings with Plekhanov and Axelrod were productive: he strongly impressed these veterans of the Russian Social-Democratic movement. "There came here ... a young comrade, extremely intelligent, well-educated, and with a gift of speech," Plekhanov wrote to his wife R. M. Plekhanova. "It is gratifying that in our revolutionary movement there are ... people like him."¹ She noted that members of the Emancipation of Labour group saw Lenin as a "true representative of the young revolutionary generation, and their happiness knew no bounds".² But already this first meeting brought to light some divergences of views. Axelrod later recalled that when he stated his consideration about Lenin's works, he heard the following reply: "I must say that regarding my articles Plekhanov made exactly the same comments. He expressed his thought with the words: 'You are turning your backs to the liberals, we are turning our faces to them'.³ Thus, things were brought to light which later, in the changed conditions, took Axelrod and Plekhanov to the Menshevik camp.

Nevertheless, the differences had not yet grown sharp, while the mutual desire for cooperation induced the participants in these meetings to agree on joint actions. Lenin came up with an initiative that led to a firm link between Russia and foreign countries: the publication abroad of the non-periodical collection entitled *Rabotnik*, which was to print articles of a theoretical and political character and information about the working-class and Social-Democratic movement in Russia. On behalf of the Russian Social-Democrats, Lenin proposed that participation should go beyond the raising of funds and the contribution of articles; the collection *Documents*

¹ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, No. 6, 1958, p. 209.

² F. M. Arzhanov, *Beginning of the Lenin Stage of the Development of Marxism*, Leningrad, 1970, p. 29 (in Russian).

³ *Correspondence of G. V. Plekhanov and P. B. Axelrod*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1925, p. 271 (in Russian).

Characterising Our Economic Development, brought by him to Switzerland, served as the best recommendation of the creative potentialities of the "indigenous" movement, in other words, the movement operating on Russian soil.

For the first issue of *Rabotnik* Lenin gave his article *Frederick Engels* and some notes on the working-class movement in Russia. In order to ensure regular contributions for the collection, he stopped over at Wilno, Moscow, and Orekhovo-Zuyevo on his way back to St. Petersburg.¹

After Lenin's return the League of Struggle mooted the idea of launching its own newspaper, *Rabocheye dyelo* as a means of promoting agitation, generalising the experience that had been accumulated and, most importantly, familiarising people with the content and orientation of the League's activities. The first issue was completed in early December 1895. Lenin wrote the main articles for it and, in addition, edited the rest of the paper. The paper was ready for the press when almost the League's entire central group, including A. A. Vaneyev, who was in possession of the issue, was arrested. This undertaking of St. Petersburg Social-Democrats was thus cut short. However, the venture itself and the character of the articles that were written² are evidence that the newspaper might have been an important factor uniting all the Social-Democrats of Russia in a militant proletarian party.

But neither arrest (on the night of December 8), nor the ensuing exile to Siberia (in 1897) halted Lenin's efforts to turn the League of Struggle into the core of the party being set up. His draft programme for a Social-Democratic party and also the pamphlets *The New Factory Law* and *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats* written by him for the League were of the utmost importance.

He responded quickly to the requests of comrades, who had escaped arrest, to draft the programme for a Social-Democratic organisation, for this accorded with his own intentions. The draft was soon ready and smuggled out of his place of exile.³ A few months later, in the summer of 1896, Lenin wrote and sent to the Social-Democrats operating in St. Petersburg his *Explanation of a Programme*, in

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 19-27; "To P. B. Axelrod", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, pp. 20-22. Altogether three double issues of the collection were printed.

² Only one of the articles written by Lenin for this issue is extant: *What Are Our Ministers Thinking About?* (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 87-92); the content of the other articles is known from the book *What Is to Be Done?* (*Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 376-77) and also from police records on the "case" of Lenin and his associates.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 95-98.

which he definitively substantiated and explained every point of his draft.¹

Lenin was familiar with the programme documents of the Emancipation of Labour group, the programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany adopted at the Erfurt congress in 1891, and Kautsky's comments on it published in the next year. In those days, as we have already noted, the Erfurt programme was regarded by the socialist parties of many countries as a model for their own programmes. An analysis of the programme drafted by Lenin at the close of 1895 and early 1896 will show that it too was based on the Erfurt programme (for instance, the coincidence of the structure of these documents and of the content of their provisions).²

As distinct from Plekhanov's *Second Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democrats*, which had a fairly large circulation, Lenin's draft substantively characterised the objective conditions under which the working-class movement was developing. A workers' party programme, Lenin wrote some years later, should "bring into the foreground and emphasise more strongly the process of economic development that is engendering the material and spiritual conditions for the Social-Democratic working-class movement, and the class struggle of the proletariat which the Social-Democratic Party sets itself the aim of organising".³

It was in this key that Lenin's draft is written.

As in the Erfurt programme, its preamble gave a concise characteristic of the capitalist mode of production, the place held by the working class in capitalist society, and the historic mission and task of the proletariat. The draft stated that the class struggle against capitalism was a political struggle, and noted that for the working class of Russia it was of special significance to win political freedom. The immediate task of the Social-Democrats, Lenin wrote, was to foster the class consciousness of the workers, help them to organise, and show them the ultimate aim of the liberation struggle; moreover, he formulated the tasks of the Social-Democrats relative to other currents of the revolutionary and opposition movements.

Importance was attached to the demand for the transition of political power to the working class and for the socialisation of all the means of production. This demand was also in the Erfurt pro-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 98-121 (only part of this document is extant).

² V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 235.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

gramme but there it was stated with less clarity.¹ On the whole, the theoretical part of the draft drawn up by Lenin was much more clearly worded than in the Erfurt programme, which Engels had criticised for its verbosity, for the striving to "combine two things that are uncombinable: a programme and a *commentary* on the programme as well".² Lenin did not know of this criticism at the time (it was only published in 1901), but his draft conformed entirely with what Engels wanted to see.

Like the programmes of other socialist parties, Lenin's draft stated: "The movement of the Russian working class is, according to its character and aims, part of the international (Social-Democratic) movement of the working class of all countries."³ One of the provisions repeated the famous words of the Constituent Manifesto of the First International: "The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself."⁴

The concluding sections of the draft enunciated the practical demands of the Social-Democrats, including demands on the agrarian question which were not to be found in the Erfurt programme or in the documents of the Emancipation of Labour group. That the practical demands in the 1895 draft were elaborated in great detail is seen from the fact that subsequently almost all the provisions in them were included in the Programme of the RSDLP adopted in 1903 at the 2nd Congress and comprised nearly half of the party's minimum programme. Of course, most of them were further elaborated and amplified, including by Lenin himself, in the course of the work on the programme drafts. Nonetheless, a comparison makes it plain that already then Lenin had in mind the practical tasks confronting the Russian Social-Democrats.

An important point is that the agrarian section of the 1895 draft contained the demand for the return of the *otrezki* (plots of land) to the peasants, which, Lenin felt, would help to draw the peasantry into the revolutionary movement against tsarism. This demand was central to the agrarian programme of the Russian Social-Democrats up to the revolution of 1905-1907, when the unparalleled scale of the peasant actions showed that a wider-ranging, much more far-reaching programme demand for the nationalisation of the land was possible and necessary.

¹ *Lenin in the Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 21-23 (in Russian).

² Frederick Engels, "A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891"; Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 429.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 96.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

The ideological and political development of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was thus crowned with a programme that proceeded from the tasks confronting the entire Social-Democratic movement in Russia and, in this sense, was a general party document. Indeed, as N. K. Krupskaya tells us, Lenin linked the drafting of the programme to the coming first congress of Russian Social-Democrats, the preparations for which had in fact commenced as early as 1896.¹ This was the angle from which Lenin's draft was considered also by the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats. It was seen as a general party document later as well, in the late 1890s.

A pamphlet entitled *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*², written by Lenin at the close of 1897, i.e. several months after he was exiled to Siberia, summed up the work of the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats, who in 1895 had united in the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. In substantiating the political programme and tactics of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, Lenin stressed that there was an indivisible unity between the socialist and democratic tasks of the working-class movement (noting at the same time that it would be a mistake to ignore the distinctions between these tasks) and called for a further improvement of Social-Democratic work in the context of this unity. Published in 1898 by the emigre League of Russian Social-Democrats, this pamphlet was widely circulated and highly assessed by the revolutionary wing of the Russian Social-Democratic movement.

While *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats* presented a generalisation of the work of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle as the embryo of the revolutionary Marxist party of the working class of Russia and its purpose was to influence the formation of that party, *The New Factory Law*,³ written a few months earlier, was in Lenin's tradition of political agitation taking into account the direct interests of the masses and linking it with facts of reality. In it Lenin brilliantly analysed the June 1897 factory law shortening the working day which, to quote this analysis, constituted "forced concessions won by the Russian workers from the police government".⁴

Upon his arrival in Shushenskoye Lenin contacted other exiled Social-Democrats, many of whom subsequently became his close associates in founding a new type of proletarian party. He tried to begin a correspondence with the Emancipation of Labour group and with N. Y. Fedoseyev, who was living in exile in Verkhoyansk (he was one of the first Russian Marxists and was held in high esteem

¹ N. K. Krupskaya, op. cit., p. 22.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 323-51.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The New Factory Law", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 267-315.

⁴ Ibid., p. 274.

by Lenin). The works written by Lenin during his exile were devoted to the struggle for a proletarian party, for Marxism's assertion as the ideology and political guideline of the Russian working-class movement.

Fundamental studies of Russia's socio-economic development during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, generalised by Lenin in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*,¹ demolished the Narodnik theories claiming that Russia was following an "original" path of development, that capitalism was "inorganic" to it, and asserted the Marxist proposition that in Russia a proletariat had come into being and was gaining strength, that this proletariat was destined to head the liberation movement of the masses against the autocracy, against all forms of exploitation and oppression. One of the inevitable products of these studies applied in the practice of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia was the detailed elaboration of an agrarian programme of the theoretical foundations of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

At the time Lenin and his associates were torn from the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class the organisation founded by them had the difficult and responsible task of directing the famous strike of 30,000 St. Petersburg textile workers in the summer of 1896. By passing this test, the League of Struggle proved the correctness of the line towards broad agitation, towards the establishment and consolidation of links between Social-Democrats and the worker masses. The events of the summer of 1896 were evidence that the League of Struggle was the forerunner of the revolutionary Marxist party, of the vanguard of the working-class movement of Russia.

A distinctive feature of the 1896 strike, which Lenin later called "the famous St. Petersburg industrial war",² was its dimension: it involved practically all the textile mills in the capital. Even more important was that unlike all the previous actions of the working class of Russia it was directly led by a Social-Democratic organisation, which, despite its small numerical strength, had already accumulated experience and won a large following among the workers. Lenin underscored this circumstance, writing that the "class-conscious, systematic Social-Democratic intervention and leadership gave this movement tremendous scope and significance as compared with the Morozov strike".³

The main cause of the spreading movement was the extremely difficult economic condition of textile workers in St. Petersburg.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 21-607.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 374.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The First Lessons", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 140.

They had a working day of up to 15-16 hours and their wage was much smaller than that of workers of other trades. This fueled dissatisfaction and led to open protests. As early as March 5, 1896, a factory inspector warned that there might be strikes at the Thornton, Novaya Bumagopryadilnya, Petrovskaya, Spasskaya, and Alexandro-Nevskaya mills "on account of the extremely low wages and the workers' deplorable living conditions in the crowded, dirty, damp, and expensive factory barracks, of the total contempt for the workers' elementary needs ... the arbitrary ways of and harassment by the factory management, the widespread system of surveillance and denunciation".¹

What triggered the events that had national and international repercussion was the failure to pay the workers for the three days of the coronation (May 15-17), which the managements of industrial enterprises declared a holiday (the workers thus lost three days' wages). The workers of the Rossiiskaya Bumagopryadilnaya were the first to strike, on May 23. Within a few days the strike reached its pinnacle: 19 textile mills were brought to a standstill. Even an "observer" like the prosecuting attorney of the St. Petersburg Judiciary Chamber noted that "unrest spread speedily among the workers ... the demands of the workers of different factories were similar and each strike followed one and the same pattern ... lastly, there was extraordinary outward calm among the masses despite all this ferment—all this indicated that the strikes broke out on soil prepared by preceding criminal propaganda among the workers".²

Indeed, although the League of Struggle had been seriously weakened by the arrests of December 1895 and January 1896, it continued to broaden its agitation. For example, its leaflet *The Workers' May Day Holiday*,³ printed in 2,000 copies, was circulated at 40 factories in St. Petersburg. The League stepped up its activities when news came that there was unrest among the textile workers. At the close of May it convened a meeting of representatives of the strikers: about a hundred people attended. One of the demands put forward was that the working day should be shortened to ten and a half hours. This was stated in a leaflet headed *What the St. Petersburg Textile Workers Are Demanding*, printed by the League of

¹ F. M. Suslova, "The Lenin-Led League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class at the Head of the 1896 Strike of St. Petersburg Textile Workers", *Ucheniye zapiski Moskovskoi vysshei shkoly profdvizheniya VTsSPS*, Issue 1, Moscow, 1957, p. 95.

² *The Working-Class Movement in 19th-Century Russia*, Vol. IV, Part 1, pp. 314-15 (in Russian).

³ *Leaflets of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class*, pp. 42-45.

Struggle on May 30 and circulated at all the textile mills, and also in the leaflet *To the Workers of All St. Petersburg Textile Mills* printed on June 1.¹ These demands, addressed to the entire capitalist class and the tsarist government, showed that the strike, which had a relatively narrow cause, had political overtones.

This increasing resort to leaflets became an important form of heading the strike; many of the leaflets were written by the workers themselves. Another form was the organisation of meetings of workers or of their representatives. These meetings "were quite unusual for St. Petersburg and amazed everyone even slightly familiar with the police regime in Russia",² stated a report of the Russian delegation to the London Congress (1896) of the Second International.

On June 2, acting on assignment from the League of Struggle, F. V. Lengnik and L. K. Martens organised a meeting of elected representatives of all the striking workers in the Narvsko-Moskovsky district of St. Petersburg. They urged the continuation of the strike until all the workers' demands were met. Lengnik spoke of the repercussions of the St. Petersburg strike, of the sympathy of German workers, of their collection of funds to help the strikers. He read out a famous speech by Pyotr Alexeyev. In this way the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats gave the movement a political content.

The strike began to ebb on June 13, and on June 17 all the textile mills resumed normal work. This was largely due to the government's promise that it would meet most of the workers' demands, including legislation on a shorter working day. At the same time, police repression was intensified: the arrest of Social-Democrats and militant workers deprived the strike of leadership.

However, the cessation of the strike was not a defeat either for the St. Petersburg textile workers or the League of Struggle. First, the immediate demands of the workers were partially satisfied, and later, on June 2, 1897, a law was passed shortening the working day to eleven and a half hours. Second, and more important, the 1896 strike took the working-class movement in Russia into a new phase and made it a tangible political factor. It contributed to consolidating the working class, to opening its eyes to the fact that the workers had common interests and that these interests had to be upheld by solidarity actions. The strikes in Moscow (at the Bromley Brothers and Goujon factories, the railway workshops, and other enterprises) in June and July 1896, which were started in response to the call of the Moscow Social-Democrats for support

¹ Ibid., pp. 51-55.

² *A Report Presented by a Russian Social-Democratic Delegation at the International Workers' Socialist Congress in London, Geneva, 1898*, p. 11 (in Russian).

for the St. Petersburg textile workers, were evidence that traditions of proletarian solidarity were striking root in the working-class movement in Russia.

Through the 1896 St. Petersburg strike the working class of Russia attracted attention on the international scene as well. There were responses in the Social-Democratic and workers' press of many countries.¹ Funds for the strikers were raised in Switzerland, France, Belgium, Austria, and Germany. An international socialist congress in London welcomed the awakening of the Russian working class to an independent life and, on behalf of the workers of all countries, wished them courage and unflinching high morale in their formidable struggle against political and economic tyranny.²

Lenin's prevision that the switch from propaganda in study circles to agitation among the masses would take the working-class movement to a new, higher stage and speed the formation of Russian Social-Democracy into a political party of the working class came true. The historic action of the thousands of St. Petersburg textile workers against the capitalists and the autocracy brought into focus not only the ideological but also the organisational unity of the Social-Democrats of Russia. The 1896 strike showed that Social-Democracy had reached a level where it could play the role of vanguard of the working-class movement, that its further successes would largely depend on the conversion of the numerous but still scattered Marxist circles and groups³ into a party united ideologically (on the platform of a genuinely Marxist programme) and organisationally.

Lenin's League of Struggle acted as the organiser of the Social-Democratic Party. However, after the innumerable and devastating police raids it lacked the strength to convene a congress; planned for 1896 this congress took place two years later. Members of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle took part in all the main preparatory work linked to that event, but its convener was the Kiev Social-Democratic organisation, which in 1897-1898 was functioning vigorously and had by its work won prestige in the Social-Democratic

¹ In addition to printing a long report about the strike, the newspaper of the German Social-Democrats, *Vorwärts*, wrote: "We wish the St. Petersburg comrades further successes on their difficult road and can assure them that the German Social-Democrats are following the penetration of the socialist teaching into Russia with fraternal understanding. The organised workers of Germany declare their solidarity with the St. Petersburg workers, who, despite the whip of tsarism, have risen with pride and courage, under the banner of international socialism, to fight oppression" (*Vorwärts*, June 27, 1896).

² *Listok rabotnika*, No. 2, 1896, p. 10.

³ In 1897-1898 there were Social-Democratic study circles and groups in more than 50 towns, while in 1894 they had functioned in roughly 15 towns (*A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, p. 234).

movement of Russia. A major contributing factor was the publication in August and December 1897 of *Rabochaya gazeta*, in which the Kiev Social-Democrats proclaimed that the immediate task of the working-class movement in Russia was to fight the tsarist autocracy and that it was imperative for all the Social-Democratic circles to unite in a single party. This, the editorial in the newspaper's second issue said, would make the working-class movement inestimably stronger.

One of the preparatory steps for the congress was a conference of St. Petersburg and Kiev Social-Democrats in Kiev in March 1897. An important recommendation of this conference was that henceforth all the Social-Democratic organisations in Russia should call themselves leagues of struggle for the emancipation of the working class. This was evidence that the movement to unite the Social-Democratic organisations in a party was proceeding under the influence of the principles worked out in the St. Petersburg League of Struggle under Lenin's leadership.

With police harassment on the rise it did not prove easy to convene a congress. It finally opened in March 1898 in Minsk, where delegates from the St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, and Yekaterinoslav leagues of struggle, the *Rabochaya gazeta* group, and the General Jewish Workers' Union of Russia and Poland (known as the Bund, it was formed in September 1897) proclaimed the formation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. A Central Committee was elected, the Kiev *Rabochaya gazeta* was given the status of party newspaper, and the basic principles of the party's structure were endorsed.

"The splendid beginning ... was consummated by the formation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party," Lenin wrote.¹ This news was acclaimed by all Social-Democrats engaged in activities among the workers in various parts of Russia or living in exile or in emigration.

The significance of the 1st Congress of the RSDLP was that its Manifesto formalised the trend towards unity among the Russian Social-Democrats on the platform of revolutionary Marxism, towards the party's conversion into the political vanguard of the working class. In addition to stating the revolutionary orientation of the Social-Democratic movement, the Manifesto proclaimed the struggle for the overthrow of the autocracy, for political freedom as the fundamental condition for the development of the working class and the success of its efforts to win "partial improvements and ultimate liberation". The Manifesto saw the winning of political freedom as the immediate task of the RSDLP and characterised it as the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Our Immediate Task", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 215.

first step "towards the fulfilment of the proletariat's historic mission of building a social system that will have no room for exploitation of man by man".¹

The decision on the party's name was of great significance. The accepted name meant that the party would be guided by proletarian internationalism and seek to unite in its ranks proletarians of all the nationalities inhabiting Russia. Further, the congress resolutions recognised the right of every nationality to self-determination, and this subsequently became the main demand of the RSDLP on the nationalities question.

However, the congress did not ensure genuine unity. It did not adopt a programme, while its resolutions on organisational matters were general and did not meet the urgent need for subordinating all local activity to the overall tasks of the Social-Democratic and working-class movement as a whole. More, the new repressions that soon rained down on the Social-Democratic organisations created serious obstacles to the party's further development, to its conversion into a genuine vanguard of the proletarians of Russia. This resulted in a growth of opportunism among the Social-Democrats, organisational disunity, and a resurgence of the traditions of study-circle activity. But as subsequent developments showed, these and similar difficulties were transient. The steady growth of the mass working-class movement and the efforts of Lenin (first in Siberian exile and then in emigration) and his associates not only ensured the restoration of the positions won earlier but also led to a further rapid development of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia on a consistently revolutionary foundation, to the creation in Russia of a Marxist workers' party of a new type, the Bolshevik Party.

¹ *1st Congress of the RSDLP*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 79-81 (in Russian).

Chapter 8

MAIN TRENDS OF THE PROLETARIAN CLASS STRUGGLE IN EUROPE, THE USA, AND JAPAN AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH AND BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT'S DEVELOPMENT

The relatively peaceful period of capitalist development came to an end in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Capitalism was entering the stage of imperialism: this aggravated the contradictions between labour and capital, between the various groups in the ruling classes in individual countries, and between the imperialist powers. The proletarian movement was faced with the task of beginning comprehensive practical preparations for overthrowing bourgeois rule. The new conditions and the possibilities for struggle made it necessary for the working-class movement to change and improve the forms and methods of activity that had been evolved in the previous decades.

The beginning of the century was marked everywhere by attempts of the bourgeoisie to mount an assault on the working class. Dazzled by unprecedented profits and bent on making more money, it feverishly sought to bring down all restrictions. The bourgeoisie had every reason to see workers' organisations as the main impediment to unchallenged control of production. This prompted it to embark upon a crusade against trade unions, against the right to strike, and against any concession to the proletariat at individual enterprises and industries and on a nation-wide scale. The assault on the trade unions became one of the stimuli for the creation of industrial corporations. It was not accidental that in the USA, where monopolies sprang up earlier, were richer and grew faster, where in the preceding decades they had used all their power to suppress the workers' struggle for their rights, anti-labour policy assumed particularly acute forms. Under the Sherman Antitrust Act, formally aimed against the machinations of the trusts but in fact spearheaded at strikes, the latter were unfoundedly proclaimed conspiracies to limit trade, while participation in strikes was made punishable by imprisonment or fines. The bourgeois state persisted in refusing

to recognise the legal force of collective bargaining and this allowed entrepreneurs to violate the resultant agreements. State governors and the federal administration, headed from 1897 by the rabid reactionary William McKinley and from 1901 by the pseudo-progressist Theodore Roosevelt, systematically used troops to suppress strikes, thereby trampling the foundations of bourgeois-democratic legality.

The US "experience" was widely used by the bourgeoisie of other countries. In Britain the "tyranny of the trade unions" was condemned by the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie, which increasingly sought organisational unity as it saw that it was lagging behind in the concentration of economic power. The British capitalists set up a parliamentary committee of employers, in which almost all industries were represented. This committee fought the trade unions nation-wide, bringing pressure to bear on the parliament and the government, which in that period were in the hands of the Conservatives. Businessmen also formed branch federations, the most powerful of which, the Employers' Federation of Engineering Associations struck a blow at the Engineering Union, one of the oldest and most influential, in 1897-1898.

A massive attack was made on the long-standing rights of the trade unions and the right of the workers to strike in 1900-1901, when, after a long trial, the House of Lords passed a verdict in favour of the Taff Vale Railway Company's claim that it was making on the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Under this verdict the trade union had to compensate the company for losses sustained during a recent strike. This created a precedent, which was at once used by employers, who took trade unions to court and obtained tens of thousands of pounds from them. "Court injunctions instructing trade unions to compensate the capitalists for losses caused by a strike means in fact destroying the right to strike,"¹ Lenin wrote.

In Sweden a law passed in 1899 preserved the right to strike but made picketing and other ways of fighting strike-breakers a punishable offence. It became much harder for strikers to get concessions from the capitalists. In 1902 Swedish employers formed a national association directed against the working class.

In Germany the government of Prince Hohenlohe (1894-1900) tried to suppress the working-class movement and prohibit strikes. In 1899 it submitted a bill to the Reichstag making participation in a strike punishable by three years' imprisonment. This bill was voted down.

In Italy the closing years of the nineteenth century saw a series of savage reprisals against workers in the north and against peasants

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Notes on 'The British Labour Movement and the Trade Union Congress'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1965, p. 413.

in the south. In 1899 Italian reaction attempted to further brutalise laws aimed against the working-class movement but failed at the last moment to enlist the support of a parliamentary majority.

In this period the ruling circles of capitalist countries began developing a new line towards the working class and workers' organisations. As Lenin noted, "in every country the bourgeoisie inevitably devises two systems of rule, two methods of fighting for its interests and of maintaining its domination... The first of these is the method of force, the method which rejects all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms—such is the nature of the conservative policy... The second is the method of 'liberalism', of steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions, and so forth."¹

In most cases the first method fell short of its aim, and this strengthened the position of the politicians inclined to resort to the flexible tactics of manoeuvring and concessions. This line was favoured not only by the petty and middle bourgeoisie, who were being driven against the wall by the monopolies, but also by a segment of the big capitalists, who feared that violence against the working masses would have adverse consequences for the ruling classes.

In the social sphere the tactics of manoeuvring were seen in the attempts to build up a mechanism for "social partnership". In the USA this led to the formation in 1900 of the National Civic Federation, which united the biggest monopolists, the leaders of reformist trade unions, and "neutral" representatives of the public. The latter included bourgeois politicians (for instance, former President Grover Cleveland), bankers, and "retired" industrialists (for instance, the billionaire Andrew Carnegie).

In the political sphere it strengthened liberal tendencies in some bourgeois parties which were largely a forced response to the growth of the working-class and democratic movements. As the position of proponents of the second method grew stronger the parliaments in Germany and Italy rejected extreme anti-labour legislation. This tendency became more pronounced in subsequent years.

In Italy the failure of the repressive policy of the 1890s was succeeded by an "era of liberalism" associated with the resourceful, demagogic bourgeois politician Giovanni Giolitti. The Socialists were released from prison, the right of the workers to strike was recognised, and suffrage rights were extended in 1904. At the beginning of the century France was governed by the so-called radical cabinets, which flirted with the working class while not renouncing

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Differences in the European Labour Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 350.

the use of violence. In the USA President Theodore Roosevelt lent his name to an anti-trust campaign. In Germany the question of "extraordinary laws" against the working class was not raised again after the resignation of Hohenlohe. In Britain the radical wing of the Liberal Party promised to restore the right to strike if it was returned to power.

Even in autocratic Russia there appeared, as Lenin wrote in 1902, "the home-bred, native liberalism of the Moscow merchants and manufacturers",¹ who spoke up for recognition of the legality of strikes. Lenin wrote that "the Russian manufacturers have been compelled to adopt this liberal standpoint by none other than our workers".²

Liberal measures and partial concessions amounted to a certain retreat from the tendency towards political reaction, which came to the fore at the dawn of imperialism. These were partial concessions and hardly changed the condition of the bulk of the workers, who continued to be subjected to the most brutal oppression. This bred dissatisfaction and contributed to the spread of revolutionary feeling.

At the same time, the tactics of manoeuvring, adopted by a section of the bourgeoisie and the political forces championing its interests, sowed the illusion among certain contingents of the working class that the condition of the proletariat could be changed radically while preserving the capitalist system. This illusion encouraged different reformist trends in the working-class movement. Many personalities who adhered to Marxist views and played a positive role in asserting Marxism in the working-class movement continued to think in terms of a "peaceful period". Failing to see the new possibilities for the liberation movement, they absolutised the day-to-day political struggle, confining themselves to minor, transient aims and thereby building bridges to reformism.

A consequence of this was the further demarcation of revolutionary and opportunist tendencies in the working-class movement and an aggravation of the struggle between them.

The correlation between these tendencies in different countries depended largely on their socio-economic and political level and also on the character of the immediate tasks confronting the national contingents of the working class. As shown earlier, imperialism sharply intensified the unevenness in the development of individual countries; at the turn of the century the working class came under greater monopoly oppression in Germany and the USA than, for instance, in Britain, France, and other countries, where the development of monopolies was slower.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Draft of a New Law on Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 219.

² *Ibid.*, p. 221.

Also, the working class and other working people were hit to varying degrees by the growth of militarism and military expenditures: this was felt most tangibly in Germany and Britain, which had then started a race for naval strength, and also in Russia, which maintained a huge land army. Moreover, Britain fought a costly war in southern Africa in 1899-1902, and Russia entered into a clash with Japan in the Far East in 1904. The condition of the working class was differently influenced by the increasing export of capital, which is a feature of imperialism. While in Britain and France, the growing export of capital inhibited the development of industry and multiplied unemployment, in the USA and Germany this export did not yet reach such proportions and the situation in the labour market remained more favourable for the workers. In Russia, which was a market for heavy foreign investment, the workers were oppressed not only by their "own" but also by the British, French, and Belgian bourgeoisie.

Although all this somewhat modified the pattern of the working-class movement of the nineteenth century, the movement itself remained unchanged. In Britain and the USA its main features were determined by the fact that in these countries the national social tasks put forward by the preceding epoch had, on the whole, been fulfilled in a bourgeois-democratic spirit.¹ Roughly the same features characterised the situation in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and some other countries.

Following Marx and Engels, Lenin classified Germany, "a country where the bourgeois-democratic revolution was still unconsummated,"² as belonging to another group of capitalist states. The situation was similar in Austria-Hungary, Italy, Spain, and some Balkan countries.

Lastly, there was a third group of countries where bourgeois-democratic orders were absent altogether, and a bourgeois-democratic revolution was coming to a head. Tsarist Russia was the only large state in this category.

Of course, some very important democratic tasks remained unfulfilled in the first two groups of countries as well. In the USA pre-capitalist methods of exploitation were still being applied to the Black population, which was in fact denied political and civil rights. In Britain there still were such anti-democratic institutions as the hereditary House of Lords. Moreover, with the transition to imperialism, all peoples were confronted with the task of defending

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of *Letters by Johannes Becker, Joseph Dietzgen, Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, and Others to Friedrich Sorge and Others*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 364.

² *Ibid.*, p. 373.

democratic gains against impingement by monopoly capital. However, for the working-class movement the basic, historically-shaped distinction, pointed out by Lenin, was of paramount significance.

The peculiarity of the situation in the working-class movement of one or another country or group of countries was also determined by the proletariat's level of organisation, the degree of the dissemination and maturity of the socialist ideal, traditions, national specifics, and—last but not least—the tactics employed by the ruling classes.

In the light of the above it will be appreciated why at the turn of the century the revolutionary trend naturally and irreversibly became predominant chiefly in the working-class movement of Russia. This was due to the interaction of a number of factors. The working people's difficult economic condition and total denial of rights prepared the soil for their spontaneous protests against the autocracy and capitalism. Under the leadership of the revolutionary, Marxist vanguard, this protest developed into a powerful movement for democracy and socialism. As Lenin pointed out, the general situation in Russia "does not favour any efflorescence of 'socialist' opportunism among the masses of the workers".¹

The Marxist proletarian party brought the proletariat socialist consciousness and organisation and roused it to decisive action. This gave shape to the great force that proved able to utterly demolish the old social and state-political system.

In the German working-class movement the situation was different. The German proletariat had for many decades held an advanced position in the international working-class movement and fought energetically for economic, political, and social rights, using strikes, demonstrations, rallies, election campaigns, parliamentary actions, and well-organised trade union and educational work. As a result, millions of German workers acquired a sense of human dignity and were proud of belonging to a class to which the future belonged. A proletarian intelligentsia grew numerically, its members having wide social and spiritual interests.

However, some of these successes harboured a grave danger. Although revisionism had not struck root in the worker masses, and this was precisely on what the Marxist leaders of the party relied in rejecting Bernsteinism, the "peaceful" character of the struggle during the previous decades had to some extent blunted the revolutionary spirit of German Social-Democracy. While they were evidence of the enhanced might of the working class, the Social-Democratic victories at elections, especially in 1903, led to an

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and War", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 319.

overestimation of possibilities in using the parliament and gave the right wing in the party an argument in favour of reformism.

In neighbouring Austria-Hungary the objective conditions of the proletariat's struggle and the character of the immediate tasks facing it were largely comparable to what obtained in Germany. But the situation was compounded by two circumstances: the glaring unevenness of the economic and social development of the empire's various regions and, more conspicuously, the existence of extremely acute national contradictions. The quests for methods of combining the struggle for the proletariat's class interests and the assertion of the democratic principle of the right of nations to self-determination failed to produce in the Austro-Hungarian working-class movement a correct theoretical solution or the appropriate tactics.

In Britain the working-class movement continued to be influenced mainly by trade-unionism. True, the masses showed an instinctive gravitation towards socialism engendered by the conditions of the life and struggle of the working class and by energetic socialist propaganda. Although reformist socialism of the Fabian type predominated in this propaganda, the Marxist orientation was strong. But no socialist party was formed that might have given the working-class movement militant political leadership. This was the principal weakness of the British proletariat compared with many other national contingents of the working class.

In the working class of the United States, too, trade-unionist reformism remained predominant. But it was unionised to a much lesser extent than in Britain. There were few Marxist and other socialist organisations.

THE STRIKE STRUGGLE

The fact that the twentieth century began with an economic crisis complicated the proletariat's defence of its right to professional and political organisation, of its freedom of strike and demonstration, and also of its immediate economic interests. Moreover, the dimensions and dynamics of the strike struggle were influenced by non-economic factors. For instance, the legalisation of strikes in Italy fostered their growth even in crisis years; on the contrary, the court verdict on the Taff Vale Railway Company case inhibited the strike struggle in Britain. Much also depended on the outcome of the major strikes in previous years. After their defeat in 1898 the British mechanical engineers avoided strikes for some time. On the other hand, the success of the North American coal miners, who, after staging a series of strikes, compelled the legislative assembly of the state of Colorado to adopt an act in 1899 limiting the working day to eight hours, encouraged this form of struggle. The scale,

course, and results of strikes were significantly influenced by the organisation level of both the working class and the bourgeoisie and, more importantly, by the tactics of the two confronting classes.

Strikes and other actions against exploitation restrained the assault of the monopolies. While it saw the limitations of solely an economic struggle and that the social system could not be changed without recourse to other methods, Marxism attached great significance to this form of struggle. Lenin wrote with indignation about the liberals' scorn for a struggle aimed at improving life under capitalism, saying that "the question of a higher standard of living is *also* a question of principle, and a most important one".¹

In the face of difficulties, the strike struggle and the working-class movement as a whole continued to develop, albeit unevenly, as the following table shows.

Dynamics of the Strike Struggle in the Leading Capitalist Countries
(close of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century)

	1896		1899		1900		1902		1903		1904	
	number of strikes	number of strikers ('000)	number of strikes	number of strikers ('000)	number of strikes	number of strikers ('000)	number of strikes	number of strikers ('000)	number of strikes	number of strikers ('000)	number of strikes	number of strikers ('000)
Britain	926	198	719	180	648	188	442	256	387	177	355	87
Germany	483	128	1,311	116	1,468	141	1,106	70	1,144	135	1,190	145
France	476	50	744	177	903	222	512	212	571	124	1,028	271
Belgium	139	23	104	58	146	32	73	10	70	7	81	12
Russia	118	29	719	180	648	188	442	256	387	117	355	87
Austria	305	69	311	60	303	113	264	44	324	51	414	73
Italy	211	96	268	45	410	93	1,031	344	596	131	838	213
USA	1,066	249	1,838	431	1,839	567	3,240	691	3,648	788	2,419	573

Needless to say, these figures must be accepted with reservations. The official statistics on which they have been based do not give a true picture of the dimensions of the strike movement. In most cases they ignore political strikes, short economic strikes, strikes at small factories, and so on. Nor do they mirror the innumerable cases in which employers made concessions without resistance or immediately after a strike was declared. Some of the figures in the table may give the impression that the activity level of the working class dropped, whereas in fact it grew.

Nonetheless, from this table one does get an idea of the *dynamics of the strike movement*, and the picture is, on the whole, an impressive one.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Economic and Political Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 88.

The table shows that before the crisis the largest number of strikes was to be observed in 1899. The exceptions were Italy and Britain. The USA held first place for the number of strikes and strikers. In Europe the highest indices were registered in Britain, Germany, and France. In Britain the strike movement was particularly stubborn in a huge loss of working days. In 1897-1900 the average duration of the strikes in terms of per striker was 37 days (60 days in 1898) in Britain, 21 days in Austria, 17 days in France, 13 days in Germany, and nine days in Italy.

During the first year of the economic crisis the strike movement remained on the upgrade in Germany, France, and Austria, registering even a higher level than in preceding years. But then the scale of the movement declined sharply in these countries; the strikes were no longer as dogged and long as in pre-crisis years.

In Belgium the commencement of the economic crisis brought about a drastic reduction of strike activity. But in 1902 that country was hit by a severe political crisis, that was accompanied by a general strike involving an unprecedented number of participants.¹

In Italy the crisis years witnessed a sharp growth of the strike movement due to non-economic causes. In 1901 there were four times as many strikes as in the previous year, and nearly five times as many strikers.

In the USA the number of strikers declined during the first crisis year (1898), but then up to 1903 the strike movement tended to grow. In 1904 the number of strikers again fell sharply.

The strikes of those years registered a *relatively high success rate*. In Germany, for example, it rose from 19 per cent in 1900 to nearly 25 per cent in 1904. In France and Austria the growth of the success rate was not so stable, but it was nevertheless visible.² As a rule, a high percentage of successful strikes was due to the general growth of the working-class movement in the country concerned. In Belgium, for instance, the general strike of 1902 impressed the bourgeoisie to the extent that for a number of years it did not venture to aggravate relations with the workers.

Many strikes ended in a compromise. This compromise cannot be assessed in one and the same way in all cases, although official statistics equated it to a defeat of the workers. Actually, in view of the bourgeoisie's unchallenged rule, of the vigorous activities of its powerful machinery of coercion, a compromise was in many cases evidence of a relative success by strikers. For an assessment it is essential to consider what demands were accepted or rejected by the

¹ This was not mirrored in official statistics.

² In France: 10.8 per cent in 1900, 8.4 per cent in 1901, and 19.81 per cent in 1904, in Austria: 4.65 per cent in 1900, 20.13 per cent in 1901, 10 per cent in 1903, and 18.57 in 1904.

employers and which of these were the most significant for the workers in those years.

A characteristic feature of the strike movement of those years was the perceptibly *greater significance of political demands*. With the trade unions harassed everywhere, an objective of struggle was frequently the right of workers to unite. Such was, for instance, the objective of a strike by 3,000 stone-quarry workers in North Wales, Britain, a strike that lasted intermittently for nearly seven years (1896-1903). The above-mentioned strike by British mechanical engineers (1897-1898) was in the same category.

Strikes demanding the right to unionise were staged also in the USA. There was a bitter struggle for the existence of the Western Federation of Miners, against which the mining association had recourse to lockouts, provocations, assassination, and trigger-happy troops. Towards the close of 1904, after a long struggle, the scales tilted in favour of the trade union.

Alongside violence against strikers demanding recognition of their right to unionise, use was made of subtle methods. In 1902 a strike was sparked at enterprises of the United States Steel Corporation by the management's refusal to apply the articles of an earlier collective agreement to enterprises employing unorganised workers. The National Civic Federation intervened in the conflict. The President of the American Federation of Labor Samuel Gompers and the President of the United Mine Workers of America John Mitchell prevented the staging of solidarity strikes, and this doomed the steelworkers to failure. The strike leaders were forced to sign an agreement protecting the "rights" of strike-breakers. This setback hindered the further organisation of steel industry workers.

In Pennsylvania and other northeastern states the miners displayed enormous persistence. In May 1902 as many as 144,000 miners went on strike despite the attempts to settle the conflict by a compromise undertaken by the National Civic Federation and Mitchell. The strikers stood firm and by the autumn there was an acute shortage of fuel in the nation. This induced President Theodore Roosevelt to order the formation of an arbitration commission. Its recommendations only provided for a partial satisfaction of the strikers' demands, with the result that the success of the strike was incomplete.

The tendency towards government agencies to intervene in class conflicts in the interests of industrialists became increasingly perceptible. That this was not a purely American phenomenon was shown by the analogous stand taken by the French government in the autumn of 1902, when a general miners' strike was staged; it spread to ten departments and involved 108,000 miners (the vast majority of the coal mining workforce). Direct intervention by government agencies in labour conflicts was evidence that the bourgeois state's

social activity had expanded. This became quite clear, although the extent of the state's involvement in the settlement of labour conflicts and the forms of this involvement differed substantially.

In Russia the strikes acquired a very clear-cut political orientation. Political strikes comprised 8.4 per cent of the total in 1898, 20.7 per cent in 1900, and 53.2 per cent in 1903.¹ New centres of the working-class movement sprang up—Sormovo, Saratov, Lugansk, Zlatoust, and Rostov-on-Don. Metalworkers lined up with textile workers in the forefront of the strike movement. They were joined by workers of non-Russian regions—the Transcaucasus (Baku, Tiflis) and the Baltic area (Riga). The mass struggle of the proletariat thus acquired a clearly expressed multinational character and an all-Russia dimension.²

The mood noted by tsarist authorities at large enterprises in the south of Russia became general among the worker masses. "There are some industrial enterprises," the governor of Yekaterinoslav reported to St. Petersburg in 1902, "where the workers have shown a special inclination to protest and strike, and display a constant readiness for disorder... In many cases the protests, dissatisfaction, and unrest among these workers are based not only on incorrect accounting or changed wage rates, bad treatment, and such like, but stem from questions of principle: an eight-hour working day, the right of worker representation at the discussion of government measures, the celebration of May Day, and so on, or, influenced by Socialist propagandists, they set their sights on wider-ranging ... aims that concern the political system of Russia, the community of interests of the working class and students, the need to participate in anti-government demonstrations and so forth. This tendency ... is spreading more and more."³

During the first years of the twentieth century the strike struggle in Russia distinctly revealed features that were displayed most fully later, during the first Russian revolution: a mass character, the coupling of economic and political demands, and the tendency of strikes to develop into more resolute forms of class struggle.

Indicative from this point of view was the sharp class collision in May 1901 at the Obukhov factory in St. Petersburg in protest against the dismissal of 26 workers who had participated in a May Day strike. All of the factory's 3,600 workers downed tools. Their demands were, among others: freedom to celebrate May Day, reinstatement of the dismissed workers, an eight-hour working day, higher

¹ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, pp. 274, 357.

² *The Working-Class Movement in Russia in 1901-1904. A Collection of Documents*, Leningrad, 1975 (in Russian).

³ A. F. Vovchik, *Tsarist Policy on the Labour Issue in the Pre-Revolutionary Period (1895-1904)*, Lvov, 1964, p. 43 (in Russian).

wages, and recognition of the right to elect workers' representatives. The strikers went out into the streets and marched to the neighbouring factories. They were joined by many workers and also by inhabitants of the villages of Alexandrovskoye, Murzinki, and Rybatskoye. Apprised of what was happening, chief of the St. Petersburg police went to the Obukhov factory at the head of a squadron of mounted police. Squadrons were sent to other striking factories. The attempts of the police and troops to disperse the strikers with firearms were resisted, and several attacks by mounted police, gendarmes, and infantry were repulsed. The resistance of the workers was broken with immense difficulty. In the clashes seven persons were killed, scores were wounded, and some 200 arrested.¹ The "Obukhov defence" had the strongest repercussions among working people throughout Russia. Lenin classified this development among the "desperate outbursts" that "arouse to conscious life the widest sections of the workers, oppressed by poverty and ignorance, and stimulate in them a noble hatred for the oppressors and enemies of liberty".²

There was considerable strike activity in Germany during these years although the conditions were complex. The exploitative power of monopoly capital was greater than anywhere else in Europe. But despite the attempts to limit even purely economic actions of the working people there were 2,900 conflicts in Germany in 1903-1904. One of the most notable of these was the strike of textile workers in Crimmitschau. It lasted more than five months, and was characterised by an active participation of women workers and direct confrontation with the authorities. The factory owners rejected the demands for a nine-hour working day and a 10 per cent pay rise but failed to end the strike with the aid of strike-breakers. The strikers held out staunchly in spite of material privation. To some extent these privations were alleviated by support from other contingents of the working class, who collected a million marks for them. Acting on a request from the entrepreneurs, the authorities proclaimed a state of siege in the district.³ This only made the strikers more determined to fight. But what the authorities failed to do was done by the trade union leadership, which ordered the cessation of the strike. At the close of 1904 another serious social conflict began to surface in Germany, this time in the coal industry.

There was a visible exacerbation of the strike struggle in Austria-Hungary. The working-class movement received a strong impetus

¹ M. D. Rozanov, *The Heroic "Obukhov Defence"*, Leningrad, 1941 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Another Massacre", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 26.

³ Heinz Wohlgemuth, *Deutschland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1917*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963, S. 40.

from the two months' miners' strike, which began in January 1900 and embraced all the coal districts of Bohemia and Moravia. Led by the Central Strike Committee the miners of Moravska Ostrava demanded an eight-hour working day, a 20 per cent pay rise, the establishment of a minimum wage, weekly payment of wages, and the reorganisation of the mutual-aid funds and their transfer to workers' control. The miners were supported by the workers of other coal basins (altogether more than 85,000 workers went on strike). On March 11, 1900 a demonstration in solidarity with the striking miners was staged by 10,000 workers in Prague. This struggle brought the miners partial satisfaction of their demands: wages were raised by 10 per cent, a nine-hour working day was established by law on June 1, 1901, a 24-hour weekly rest was introduced for workers on underground jobs, and restrictions were made on the employment of female and child labour.¹

In 1902 a builders' strike in Lvov developed into a major action against the political regime. The strikers demanded a nine-hour day, higher pay, and employment only through the labour bureau. On June 2 thousands of workers gathered in Streletskaya Square and adjoining streets. Troops were sent and these opened fire on the demonstrators. On the same day, a catastrophe occurred in Borislav on account of a total absence of labour safety: 19 workers died, and four were injured. The funeral was turned into a powerful demonstration of protest against the regime. In the procession there were nearly 15,000 workers and peasants from neighbouring villages. There were further political demonstrations in Lvov on June 3 and 4 in connection with the shooting in the Streletskaya Square and the Borislav disaster. Workers in Cracow declared their solidarity and collected money to aid victims. The strike of the Lvov builders ended in a partial victory.

In 1902 Austrian miners and metallurgical workers, who had been on strike for three and a half months, won a pay rise and a reduction of the working day. That same year saw violence carried to extremes against a general strike of workers in Trieste. When attempts to crush their resistance with the aid of strike-breakers failed, the government called in troops who used firearms.²

General strikes became more frequent. During the first four years of the twentieth century such strikes took place in Russia, Spain, Italy, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. While their demands and their dimension differed, all were political.

In *Russia* the first general strikes were staged in 1902. On November 4, in response to a call by the Don Committee of the RSDLP,

¹ *A History of Czechoslovakia*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1959, pp. 184-86 (in Russian).

² S. V. Ovnanyan, *Growth of the Working-Class Movement in Austria (1905-1906)*, Moscow, 1957, p. 56 (in Russian).

all the workers of the main railway workshops, who were the most united and class-conscious contingent of the Rostov proletariat, walked out. The direct causes of the strike were fraud in paying the workers and a cut in wages. The Don Committee's address, issued on the day the strike was declared, contained 25 demands, including a nine-hour working day, a pay rise, and the abolition of fines.

During the very first days of the strike the Don Committee took steps to involve the workers of all the factories in the town. The strike was joined by almost all the workers of Rostov and Nakhichevan—more than 30,000. Rallies were held daily. On November 11 the troops sent to Rostov opened fire on unarmed workers at a rally. Six were killed and 26 wounded. On the next day, in response to this brutal action, the workers held another rally, which developed into a huge political demonstration.¹

This strike was excellently organised. Although ultimately only some of the demands were met, the workers won out in terms of unity and preparedness for struggle. The Rostov events demonstrated the huge growth of the proletariat's political awareness and revolutionary activity. The strike had repercussions throughout Russia and marked the beginning of a period of mass political demonstrations.

In the summer of 1903 the entire south of Russia was in the grip of a general strike. More than 200,000 workers were involved. They rose, to quote Lenin, "to fight for a better life, for freedom from police tyranny".²

This strike began in Baku where the local leadership of the RSDLP had formed a strike committee. Leaflets printed in several languages were circulated among the workers, formulating the demands to the factory owners: dismissal of the hated foremen and managers, proper treatment, an end to overtime, higher pay, and so on. Frightened by the strength and size of the strike, the government sent large military units to Baku. The Baku workers were supported by the workers of Tiflis, who declared a general solidarity strike. The city was inundated with troops. However, the strikers resisted courageously. From Tiflis the strike spread to Batum, where it was joined by port, factory, and railway workers.

Under the impact of the events in the Transcaucasus the general strike spilled over to Odessa, Kiev, Nikolayev, Yekaterinoslav, and other towns in the Ukraine. In Odessa not a single factory or workshop was in operation, and the horse-cars, trams, trains, and ships were at a standstill. The town's workers displayed extraordi-

¹ *The 1902 Rostov Strike and the Don Committee of the RSDLP (50th Anniversary of the Strike)*, Rostov-on-Don, 1952 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "May Day", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 200-01.

nary courage and staunchness. On July 17 railway workers lay down on the rails to prevent trains from running. This was repeated on July 19 by horse-car workers.

The Odessa Committee of the RSDLP called upon the workers to wage an uncompromising struggle against the autocracy, writing in one of its leaflets: "It is only in a free country that we shall breathe freely ... and with new strength and unshaken faith move on to the winning of a new system of life. We shall then direct all our energies to destroy wage slavery and the strength of capitalism once and for all."¹

The mass political strikes in South Russia continued until October 1903. They were suppressed by the tsarist government only by brutal repressions.

That same year there was a general strike of weavers in Bialystok.

In 1904 a wave of strikes swept across St. Petersburg, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Nizhny Novgorod, and the Caucasus. At the close of the year there was a strike at the Baku oil-fields. These actions saw the workers clashing with police and troops.

The story of the above-mentioned 1902 general strike in *Belgium* was extremely instructive. A political crisis was generated by the efforts of the ruling circles to preserve the anti-democratic election system. The Belgian Labour Party took a contradictory stand on this question. Having adopted a resolution at its congress to seek universal suffrage, it backed up this resolution with all the means at its disposal, including a general strike and a campaign for reform. However, its leaders wanted a bloc with the liberals and opposed the use of revolutionary means of struggle.

Without waiting for instructions from the party leadership, the workers began walking out. Only then did the party leaders call for a general strike. Between 300,000 and 350,000 workers responded. Although the strike was unfolding successfully, the party leadership halted it in five days with the argument that it had served its purpose.

Despite this setback, the strike was of inestimable significance for the Belgian working class. The proletariat grew more active politically and its organisations developed faster.

The lessons of the Belgian strike were discussed animatedly in the socialist press of some countries. Bernstein and his supporters, as could be expected, approved the actions of the BLP leadership. In contrast, Lenin's *Iskra* castigated the leaders of the Belgian Socialists for failing to display revolutionary determination, trying to restrain the workers, and opposing the coupling of a general

¹ *The General Strike in South Russia. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1939, p. 85 (in Russian).

strike with a political demonstration. *Iskra* wrote: "The socialist proletariat will see what comes of opportunist tactics sacrificing revolutionary principles in the hope of quick success."¹ Rosa Luxemburg noted that all means of struggle had to be combined skilfully, stressing that there could be no question of renouncing revolutionary violence. "If by means of parliamentary and every other activity we are revolutionising heads," she wrote, "we are doing it so that ultimately, should the need arise, the revolution can move from heads to fists."² To counter the writings of the revisionists, Lenin recommended reprinting Rosa Luxemburg's article in the journal *Zarya*³ as evidence that the Russian and foreign revolutionary Social-Democrats held identical views on fundamental issues of proletarian policy.

In *Sweden*, too, a general strike was staged as part of the struggle for universal suffrage. An extraordinary congress of the Social-Democratic Labour Party in April 1902 passed a resolution to campaign for universal suffrage, timing it to take place when the draft of the election law was debated in the Riksdag. In the long run the street demonstrations developed into a general strike involving nearly 85 per cent of the Swedish industrial proletariat and lasting for three days. Although the Riksdag rejected the motion on introducing universal and equal suffrage for men, it was compelled to recommend that the government draft a new bill extending the rights of the working people.

During the Belgian and Swedish strikes the first-ever organised attempt was made to combine the parliamentary activity of workers' parties with mass extra-parliamentary actions by the working people.

In 1903 there were two massive strikes in the *Netherlands*. One of them grew into a general strike with political aims: the right of railway workers to set up unions and to strike. Although some of the demands were met, the government responded by moving a bill in parliament that would, in fact, have outlawed strikes. Moreover, it began bringing troops into workers' districts. There was no consensus among the leaders of the Social-Democratic Labour Party or in the Resistance Committee (consisting of Social-Democrats, Free Socialists, and anarchists). Nonetheless, transport workers went on strike in the night of April 5, 1903, and on April 9 a general strike was declared in order to bring more pressure to bear on the government. But this strike ended as early as April 11. The vacillation of the Socialist leadership and the sudden refusal of the Resis-

¹ *Iskra*, No. 21, June 1, 1902.

² R. Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 1, 1893 bis 1905, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1970, S. 247.

³ V. I. Lenin, "To G. V. Plekhanov", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, 1966, p. 105.

tance Committee to continue the strike seriously prejudiced the working-class movement unfolding in the country.

The *Italian working-class movement* acquired the experience of a successful general strike at the beginning of the century. In December 1900 a united action by the workers of Genoa led to the restoration of the Labour Chamber that had been disbanded by the prefect. This triumph gave a huge impetus to the growth of the mass proletarian movement.

The next general strike in Italy (September 16-20, 1904) saw a unique coupling of the peasant and working-class movements. The strike was the angry response of factory workers in the north to news of the shooting down of farm labourers in the south, and the strike was meant as a protest against the systematic ruthless massacres of working people. On September 15, without instructions from the Socialist Party or the trade unions, factories stopped working in Milan, and on the next day in Genoa, Bologna, Florence, and Turin. The general strike paralysed the north and centre of Italy. Socialist MPs and the leadership of the newspaper *Avanti!* decided to head the strike only when it became general. However, the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party was unable and its right wing refused to become the political headquarters of the movement. The general strike, which suddenly embraced Italy's industrial centres, ended just as suddenly.

In February 1904 a general strike was staged in *Barcelona, Spain*. This strike fused with the strikes raging at the time throughout Catalonia. The workers were supported by some sections of the petty bourgeoisie. In Barcelona life was paralysed for several days. But the organisation level of the workers was inadequate. The anarcho-syndicalists heading the strike had set too high hopes on spontaneous development. The Socialists did not support the action because it was organised by the anarcho-syndicalists. This made it easier for the authorities to suppress the strikes by force of arms. Forty workers were killed and 200 wounded.

Despite its defeat, the Barcelona strike strongly impressed the whole of Europe. Some newspapers called it the "Spanish social revolution".

A glorious page was contributed to the history of the strike movement of those years by the French miners, who staged a general strike in September-October 1902. This action forced the government to reconsider the nation's social laws.

During the closing years of the "peaceful" period the mass actions were evidence that in all capitalist countries and in all the key spheres of society's life the anti-people policy of the imperialists was opposed by the growing strength, class consciousness, and organisation of the proletariat, by its determination to fight for its

economic, social, and political interests. The further development of the working-class movement depended largely on how bold and perspicacious proletarian policy would be and how purposefully this policy would be orientated on overthrowing capitalist rule. This policy could only be charted on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the radical changes that were taking place in the historical situation.

POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE PROLETARIAT

On the eve and during the initial years of the twentieth century the ranks of socialist parties, functioning mainly in developed capitalist countries, were augmented by new parties that sprang up as the proletariat took shape and matured politically in Serbia, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and other countries. Their activities covered various sections of the working class. A growing number of class-conscious, politically militant workers joined the socialist parties. An important indicator of the increasing influence of these parties was the numerical growth of the mass workers' organisations, chiefly the trade unions, cooperating with them.

The press had a large role to play in the activities of the workers' parties. The socialist press was not only a medium of trustworthy information, which was in itself a vital factor in view of the domination of the tendentious or simply venal bourgeois press, but also a medium of the ideological education of the masses, an instrument by means of which the workers' parties provided the masses with leadership. Many socialist newspapers were organising centres or strongpoints of the proletarian movement. In 1904 the socialist parties published 134 daily newspapers and 296 other periodicals.

The consolidation of organisational and ideological-political links with the proletarian masses and other segments of the population gave the socialist parties an increasingly solid base for entering elections to parliament, municipal councils, and other government bodies. In 1904 the socialist parties polled a total of 6,686,000 votes: in the parliaments there were 261 socialist deputies.¹ In some cases the flexible and persevering tactics of representatives of workers' parties were rewarded with the passage of laws benefiting the working class and its allies or with the blocking of decisions impairing the interests of the working people.

In this way the political organisations of the proletariat scored successes in various fields of activity. The workers' parties of many countries and their association on the international scene, the

¹ I. M. Krivoguz, *The Second International, 1889-1914*, Moscow, 1964, p. 170 (in Russian).

Second International—became a major political factor that could not be ignored by bourgeois organisations, governments, capitalist monopolies, and the bourgeoisie as a whole.

However, these advances were far from enough to allow leading the working class in a revolutionary assault on capitalism and winning a decisive victory. There could now be no question of confining the socialist parties to a simple expansion and invigoration of their work on the former ideological, political, and organisational level. There had to be a qualitative advance in their development. Evidence of this could be seen in the activities of the proletariat's political organisations in the industrialised countries.

In *Germany* the influence enjoyed by the Social-Democratic Party among the workers grew steadily. In 1905 it had 384,000 members. In 1903 it won 3,011,000 votes (81 deputies) at the Reichstag elections, up from 2,107,000 in 1898.¹ Lenin subsequently wrote, having the burgeoning of the SDPG in mind, that "German *revolutionary* Social-Democracy ... *came closest* to being the party the revolutionary proletariat needs in order to achieve victory".²

The situation began to change during the first years of the twentieth century. The party remained in direct and, frequently, sharp confrontation with the ruling circles; this was seen most strikingly during election campaigns or militant actions such as, for instance, the above-mentioned Crimmitschau strike. But there also were symptoms of another kind. For instance, in 1899 the leaders of the SDPG's Bavarian organisation, acting in accordance with revisionist recipes and against the traditions and decisions of the party, entered into an election agreement with bourgeois politicians. Although the 1900 Mainz congress of the SDPG banned agreements of this kind, they continued to be made.

The incipient disparity between words and deeds was also seen in the attitude to revisionism as a whole. Far from putting an end to revisionism following a debate in which it was denounced at the congresses in 1898 and 1899, revisionist ideas spread rapidly in the party after 1900. This was due to, among other things, Bernstein's return in early 1901 from Britain (where he had been in residence) and the vociferous propaganda campaign launched by him. The question was again debated at the Dresden congress in 1903. Bebel strongly denounced revisionism, while the resolution adopted on his recommendation (it became widely known in the international socialist movement) condemned the attempts to revise Marxist theory and supplant a policy oriented towards preparations for a socialist

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik, Teil 1, Von den Anfängen bis 1917*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1965, S. 187, 209.

² V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 34.

revolution with short-sighted, speculative and compromising deals with the bourgeoisie.¹ The Dresden congress and its resolutions were highly assessed by revolutionary Marxists of different countries, including the Marxists contributing to Lenin's *Iskra*.²

But the SDPG leaders did not stop at words. They had no intention of expelling proponents of revisionism from the party. Karl Kautsky, the party's theorist, contended that revisionism had the right to exist, arguing that there had to be a "contest of views" in the SDPG. *Vorwärts*, the party's central organ, maintained a "friendly neutrality" in relation to Bernstein (and also Millerand, leader of the French Bernsteinians), for which it was sharply criticised in the journal *Zarya*, that was headed by Lenin.³ On other points, too, Lenin criticised what he called the "kindness" of the German Social-Democrats to Bernstein and his supporters.⁴

The situation that was taking shape in the German Social-Democratic Party during the early years of the twentieth century was marked by its leadership's essentially negative attitude to the general strike, then a new means of the proletariat's mass struggle. It was only Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin, and other staunch Marxists who advocated using the general strike as a weapon of political struggle.

Until the close of the nineteenth century the German Social-Democratic Party was structured in accordance with the Rules adopted at the Halle congress in October 1890. Under those Rules any person who recognised the party programme and supported the party to the best of his abilities was considered a member.⁵ However, the Rules did not require formal affiliation to any of the party locals or systematic participation in party work under the appropriate leadership and control.

The SDPG was a federation in which the locals enjoyed wide autonomy. The latter maintained liaison with the party leadership through a system of delegates. The principal role was increasingly

¹ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten zu Dresden vom 13. bis 20. September 1903*, Expedition der Buchhandlung Vorwärts, Berlin, S. 419.

² *Iskra*, No. 48, October 15, 1903.

³ In this connection there was a conflict (after the *Zarya* editors put the matter to the SDPG Board), which ended with *Vorwärts* conceding that it was in the wrong (*Zarya*, No. 2/3, December 1901; V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5; *Lenin in the Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 47-48 (in Russian).

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 371.

⁵ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten zu Halle vom 12. bis 18. Oktober 1890*, Verlag Expedition des Berliner Volksblatt, Berlin, 1890, S. 5.

played by the Social-Democratic faction in the Reichstag, especially by its leaders, although they were not vested with such powers by the Rules.

The weaknesses of this structure were due not only to pressure from the opportunists. To some extent they were also the result of unceasing police harassment. Mindful of the days of the Anti-Socialist Law, the SDPG leaders did their utmost to avoid incurring new repressions.¹

During the last years of the nineteenth century it became obvious that the SDPG Rules had to be revised and adjusted to the new conditions. The system of delegates and the provision about party membership were arousing censure. This led to the debate on the question of organisation, which ended with the adoption of new Rules at the Mainz congress.

It was recommended that the congress should reconsider the party's organisational structure in favour of centralisation. Many locals suggested a more clear-cut wording for the paragraph on membership. The Saar local, for example, held that the Rules should make it binding on a party member to belong to one of the locals. The Elberfeld local insisted that members should constantly help the party with funds and, where possible, with practical activity.²

But through the efforts of the SDPG leadership all the proposals on centralisation were rejected. The first paragraph of the Rules was amended. Its new wording was: "A person who recognises the principles of the Party Programme and regularly contributes funds to the Party shall be regarded as a member."³ This meant that, as before, SDPG members did not necessarily have to be constantly involved in party work; there were no clear-cut provisions on local organisations and the relationship between the party leadership and the parliamentary faction was not defined.

These shortcomings, which had no serious negative effects in periods of relative calm, harboured a very substantial threat to the party's efficacy and unity in periods of mounting mass struggles and revolutionary ferment. The SDPG's defective structure reflected its general theoretical and political ineptness in the new conditions.

In *France* there were several socialist organisations on the political scene at the close of the nineteenth century. This fragmentation

¹ The German proletariat was making a strong stand against the anti-labour laws. The most important result of this stand was the repeal of the reactionary Prussian anti-union legislation in 1899.

² *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten zu Mainz vom 17. bis 21. September 1900*, Verlag Expedition der Buchhandlung Vorwärts, Berlin, 1900, S. 87.

³ *Ibid.*, S. 6.

of the socialist movement—resulting from the collision between different ideological schools (from Blanquism and Proudhonism to Jauresism and Guesdeism) greatly hampered the struggle of the French proletariat.

Roughly equal influence was enjoyed by the two largest of these organisations—the French Workers' Party and the Federation of Independent Socialists (founded in 1898). Small socialist groups gravitated towards them as to poles.

The socialist movement was divided not only by ideological differences and organisational partitions but also by different approaches to current political problems. The sharpest of these problems surfaced in 1899, when the Socialist Millerand joined the bourgeois government headed by Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau.

In characterising this development and showing its link to the "theory" of revisionism, Lenin wrote in 1902: "The essence of the 'new' trend, which adopts a 'critical' attitude towards 'obsolete dogmatic' Marxism, has been clearly enough *presented* by Bernstein and *demonstrated* by Millerand."¹ Millerand's action was denounced by the FWP leaders Guesde and Lafargue and also by Vaillant and other leaders of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Communist Alliance. On the other hand, it was approved by the Federation of Independent Socialists headed by Jaurès, which linked hopes and calculations of a reformist character with this step.

In the socialist movement the "Millerand case" sparked an acute struggle. Guesde, Lafargue, Vaillant, and others resigned from the united socialist faction in the parliament and published a manifesto condemning Millerand's action. The next congress of the French Workers' Party (1899) endorsed the line of action taken by Guesde; however, the party proved to have forces inclined towards reformism. At a congress of all French socialist organisations, held in Paris in December 1899, the FWP leaders backed by the Blanquists gave battle to and defeated Millerand's principal supporters, the so-called Independent Socialists, but largely because of the prestige enjoyed by Jaurès the reformist wing of the socialist movement remained strong.

Political divergences of a different kind between Socialists came to the surface in connection with the Dreyfus case. Jaurès and some other leading Socialists came forward in defence of Dreyfus, while Guesde and his supporters held that the public movement over the case was no more than a struggle between various factions of the bourgeoisie and that the working class should not intervene. The

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 353.

Guesdists backed away from their ill-advised, sectarian stand only when the army imposed a state of siege and large contingents of workers (railwaymen, builders) staged a strike in defence of the republican system and democratic rights. The actions of the democratic masses ultimately forced reaction to beat a retreat.

The political situation, which Lenin described as the threshold of civil war, compelled the Socialists to look for ways of surmounting disagreements and uniting their forces. This was achieved only partially. The French Socialist Party (which included the Federation of Independent Socialists, the Federation of Socialist Workers, and other organisations) and the Socialist Party of France (uniting the FWP, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, headed by Vaillant, the Communist Alliance, and some autonomous federations) were founded in 1901-1902. Thus, at the outset of the epoch of imperialism, on the eve of unprecedented class battles, the basic shortcoming of the French working-class movement—its fragmentation—was not fully surmounted, and this negatively affected its development.

The backbone of the Socialist Party of France consisted of textile workers, miners, steelmakers, and railwaymen. Its influence was strongest in the departments of Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Aube, and Allier, and also in the Lyons area. Its main bases were the central federations and Paris, where there was a large handicraft industry in addition to factories.

The SPF regarded itself a revolutionary class party fighting to emancipate labour and reshape capitalist society into a communist society. At its Reims congress (1903) it adopted a minimum programme demanding the lifting of restrictions on democratic freedoms, the equality of all citizens, the replacement of the standing army by a national militia, a progressive income tax, an eight-hour working day, a weekly day off, the extension of labour legislation to cover all categories of factory and clerical workers, and workers' participation in the management of factories.

Its Rules were adopted at the Commentry congress in September 1902. Underlying them were organisational principles of the FWP which strove for greater discipline and centralisation. In the intervals between annual congresses the party was headed by its Central Council, which directed propaganda, evolved tactics for the day-to-day struggle, and monitored the work of Socialist deputies and the party press. At the same time, each of the party's local federations had its own Rules that regulated their activities.

The party, thus, did not become a united organisation in the full sense of the term. For various reasons, although the Central Council was vested with broad powers, it did not cope with its duties of "monitor and leader" of the party. Representation of the federations at sittings of the Council, which was to ensure living contact be-

tween the central leadership and the local organisations, was inadequate and irregular.

An attempt to change the situation was made at the Lille congress in 1904. It adopted Rules stating that in addition to having a membership card and paying dues (this was recorded at the Commentry congress) members had to recognise the programme and Rules and abide by the decisions of federal and national congresses. In order to strengthen the centre's links with the locals the Lille congress set up a new institution of "permanent delegates", whose duties included propaganda tours and visits to local federations. This was unquestionably a step towards the party's consolidation, but it could not entirely remedy the shortcomings in its leadership. In practice the SPF's outwardly coherent organisational structure contained serious weaknesses that hindered effective work.

As regards the FSP, in 1902 it adopted a programme at Tours, which was full of socialist rhetoric and liberal-reformist demands in the spirit of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789). The programme suggested by Jaurès satisfied everybody: "...the revolutionaries by the fact that it spoke frequently of revolution, and the moderates by the fact that it was permeated with Bernsteinism."¹ For instance, it stated that "universal suffrage means communism in the sphere of political power". Practically no distinction was made between socialism and the bourgeois republic. In addition to proclaiming internationalism and calling for a struggle against the threat of war, it approved defending the bourgeois motherland.²

The FSP Rules, adopted at the Tours congress, recorded the autonomy of the department federations. The latter had their own rules determining relations with lower organisations, that likewise enjoyed considerable autonomy. Leadership of current party affairs in the period between annual national congresses was provided by the Inter-Federal Committee. However, MPs and the party press were in fact not subordinate to it, for each deputy was accountable only to his federation, while the parliamentary group was accountable to the national congress. The FSP deputies were thus not bound by one party discipline.

The St. Etienne congress in 1904 set up a new leading agency—the National Council—composed of members of the Inter-Federal Committee and the parliamentary faction. This greatly enhanced the influence of the parliamentary group on party affairs.

The brutal persecutions of the 1890s left their mark on the *Italian Socialist Party*, making some of its leaders take a more moderate

¹ *Iskra*, No. 19, April 1, 1902.

² *Quatrième congrès général du Parti socialiste français tenu à Tours du 2 au 4 mars 1902. Compte rendu sténographique officielle*, Paris, 1902, pp. 246-52.

stand than before in order to avoid provoking further repressions. This stand was shared by Turati, Leonida Bissolati, and others. The party programme contained no specific provisions about the ultimate aims of the movement, the forms of proletarian power, the revolutionary means of struggle—provisions that in the past had to some extent been accepted by the Italian Socialists (for instance, the 1881 programme of the Revolutionary-Socialist Party of Romagna).

As Palmiro Togliatti noted subsequently, a hallmark of Italian socialism was that it was “void of the most fundamental concept—the concept of revolution”. “This was particularly apparent during the first decade of the twentieth century, when, having withstood the tests of the initial period, the working-class movement had to pass through harder tests, in other words, to organise a political struggle having clear revolutionary prospects adequate to the obtaining situation.”¹

Organisationally, the Italian Socialist Party did not differ from other parties of the Second International, making no mandatory party activity incumbent upon its members. Initially it was based on collective membership, a pattern that had persisted ever since the political organisation of the working class had been combined with other forms of association. The Rules of 1895 instituted individual membership, the sole provision being that “any person sharing the Party’s principles and helping it shall be considered a member”.² Members had to pay monthly or yearly dues: nothing more was required.

At the Bologna congress in 1897 the reformists tried, unsuccessfully, to secure total decentralisation and limit the prerogatives of national party congresses. This attempt was repeated at the ISP’s first legal congress, held in Rome in 1900 after a long interval. By that time the reformists had acquired considerably more influence as a result of the switch by the Italian bourgeoisie to liberal methods of government. Other contributing factors were the mood and aspirations of the petty-bourgeois elements reinforcing the ranks of the Italian working class, and the party’s successes at elections, which tended to give the illusion that the road to socialism would be an easy one. In 1900 the party polled 216,000 votes, which gave it 33 seats in the parliament.³ A “reasonable policy of reforms” was steadfastly counterposed to revolutionary forms and methods of struggle. At the 1902 congress the reformists were in the majority. This

¹ *Istituto Gramsci, Studi gramsciani, Atti del convegno tenuto a Roma nei giorni 11-13 gennaio 1958, Roma, 1973, pp. 424, 426-27.*

² *Il Partito Socialista Italiano nei suoi Congressi, vol. 1, 1892-1902, A cura di Franco Pedone, Milano, 1959, p. 57.*

³ *Partito Socialista Italiano. 1900-1912, Padova, 1968, p. 49.*

congress recognised the total autonomy of the party's parliamentary faction and advocated freedom of alliances with bourgeois parties.

However, the protests against reformism grew louder among the ISP rank and file, and a revolutionary current against class collaboration with the bourgeoisie gained strength. The leader of the "irreconcilables" was Enrico Ferri, who in 1902 started the journal *Socialismo* in which he criticised the Turati group for its ministerialist feeling. However, both the "irreconcilables" and the reformists advocated the unconditional preservation of party unity. To use the words spoken by Palmiro Togliatti at the beginning of the twentieth century, "the revolutionary spirit of Marxist tactics lived among the masses of the Italian working people but not among their leaders".¹

In the party unity was only formal and could not stop the imminent crisis in the Italian socialist movement. Cases of party federations splitting grew more frequent from the second half of 1903 onwards. An anarcho-syndicalist tendency represented by the *Avanguardia socialista* group headed by Arturo Labriola came increasingly to the fore among the "irreconcilables".

At the close of the nineteenth century the *working-class movement of Spain* was divided into two main tendencies—socialist and anarchist. The former was represented by the Spanish Socialist Labour Party and the General Union of Working People that acted in close contact with it. The leadership of the latter was taken over in 1900 by the anarcho-syndicalist Federation of Workers' Societies.

The Socialist Party's main base was in Madrid and the industrial north—Asturia, Biscay, and the Bilbao region. At the close of the 1890s, 80 per cent of the SSLP membership consisted of factory workers and miners. The principal base of anarchism was industrial Catalonia (particularly Barcelona) and agricultural Andalusia.

Although both these branches of the Spanish working-class movement proclaimed that their ultimate goal was to deliver the working people from capitalist oppression, there were serious differences between them. The struggle against anarchism left its mark on the Spanish Socialist Labour Party's programme guidelines, principles of organisation, and policies.

The party's highest forum was its congress (at first convened every two years, and later once in three years). In the period between congresses its central leading body was the National Committee, which was headed by the party's founder, Pablo Iglesias until his death in 1925.

The SSLP had collective membership. Its discipline was rather

¹ Palmiro Togliatti, *Momenti della storia d'Italia*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1963, p. 114.

strict, and local organisations were obliged to submit to the decisions adopted by party congresses and the National Committee.

The Spanish Socialists organised strikes and mass actions against anti-labour laws and the practices of employers, and took an active stand against the sending of troops to Cuba and the Philippines in 1895 for the suppression of popular risings, against the declaration of war against the USA in 1898. But by the beginning of the twentieth century reformist trends had grown stronger in the party, and its political platform was reduced mainly to demands for an eight-hour working day, freedom of the press and assembly, inviolability of the individual, and universal suffrage, in other words, to bourgeois-democratic reforms. The idea of a social revolution as the ultimate aim of the proletarian struggle receded into the background.

The party began to see peaceful demonstrations, meetings, and participation in elections as the basic forms of struggle. The inclination towards conciliation was seen more and more clearly in tactical issues as well. While the 1892 party congress gave its attention mainly to elections and raised the question of "expelling from the party any member or group entering into agreement with bourgeois parties", the 1899 congress reconsidered the SSLP's attitude to bourgeois parties.¹ But this did not bring the party any significant success at elections. Until the close of the 1890s the SSLP failed to win a single seat in the Cortes.

An asset was the growth of the number of local organisations: at the time the first congress was held there were 16, but in 1902 their number rose to 72. However, the overall membership was small.² The General Union of Working People (GUWP) had 30,000 members in 1902.³

The abandonment of revolutionary methods of struggle by the SSLP and the GUWP and their adoption of conciliatory and reformist tactics antagonised a large section of the workers and led them to the camp of anarchism. The workers were attracted by the militant tactics of the anarchists: calls for general strikes and "direct actions" giving an outlet to dissatisfaction with the capitalist system. In 1903 nearly 400,000 workers belonged to or were influenced by anarcho-syndicalist organisations.

Anarchism's petty-bourgeois, extremist policies and tactics could not, of course, lead the proletariat to victory over capitalism, but

¹ F. Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español, desde sus primeras manifestaciones hasta nuestros días*, Madrid, 1902, p. 193; M. Nuñez de Arenas, M. Tuñón de Lara, *Historia del movimiento obrero español*, Barcelona, 1970, p. 188.

² In 1908 it had only 6,000 members (M. Nuñez de Arenas, M. Tuñón de Lara, op. cit., p. 164; L. J. Llorente, *Aproximación a la historia del socialismo español*, Madrid, 1972, p. 181).

³ F. Mora, op. cit., p. 171. This is an approximate and, most likely, exaggerated estimate.

for some time anarchism held a significant proportion of the Spanish working people in its spell. Lenin's words that "anarchism was not infrequently a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement"¹ were particularly applicable to Spain.

At the close of the nineteenth and during the early years of the twentieth century socialist ideas were propagated in the *USA* by the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party. The SLP saw parliamentary activity as the only way of improving the economic and political condition of the working people. Its Rules conspicuously bore the imprint of Lassalleanism. Its membership never rose above 15,000.

Much was done by Daniel De Leon in the way of disseminating socialist ideas, championing the production principle in the structure of the trade unions, and organising the struggle against reformism in the leadership of the American Federation of Labor. He held that a proletarian party had to be a disciplined organisation. "The modern revolutionist, i.e., Socialist must," he said in 1896, "in the first place ... necessarily work in organisation, with all that that implies. In this you have the first characteristic that distinguishes the revolutionist from the reformer...

"Tamper with discipline, allow this member to do as he likes, that member to slap the party constitution in the face, yonder member to fuse with reformers, this other to forget the nature of the class struggle and to act up to his forgetfulness—allow that, keep such reformers in your ranks and you have stabbed your movement at its vitals."²

De Leon devoted much of his energies to the class education of the American proletariat. He was tireless in showing that there could be no reconciliation of the workers' interests with those of the bourgeoisie, explaining that the working class should take independent political actions. But in his thinking and work there were considerable elements of sectarianism. In particular, they led to his renouncing work in reformist trade unions. In 1895 he initiated the foundation of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, which became a sort of branch of the Socialist Labor Party. This was largely responsible for the fact that the party became isolated from the bulk of the organised workers.

Dissatisfaction mounted in the SLP. In 1899 a large section of its membership headed by Morris Hillquit attacked De Leon's sectarian policies and, convening a conference in Rochester, adopted

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 32.

² Daniel de Leon, *Speeches and Editorials*, Vol. 1, *Reform or Revolution*, New York, pp. 16, 24.

a new platform and also a resolution to merge with the Social-Democratic Party headed by Victor Berger and Eugene Debs.

In 1901 this merger resulted in the foundation of the Socialist Party, which included the splinter section of the SLP and other socialist groups that earlier had little contact among themselves. The new party had a heterogeneous membership: workers and many other social elements. "Hundreds of Protestant ministers," wrote Ray Ginger, Debs' biographer, "joined the Party in order to work for a truly religious society. Professional men and women joined in order to express their revolt against the narrowness and hypocrisy of American life. Small businessmen joined in order to strike a blow against their larger competitors. Politicians joined in order to gain public office. Labor leaders joined in order to win promotion in their unions."¹ As a result, it became next to impossible to pursue an integral, principled line in political and organisational questions.

As soon as it was constituted the Socialist Party recognised the autonomy of its locals. A report of its National Committee stated: "Instead of being a united party, we are fast becoming a mere 'federation of Socialist Parties', each of these parties having its territorial limits and jealously guarding against any encroachment upon its domain."²

In questions of ideology the centrists dominating the party (Hillquit, for instance) hardly differed from right-wing elements (headed by Berger). Both were proponents of a gradual and, under any circumstances, peaceful transition to socialism and believed that work in municipal and parliamentary bodies was the principal sphere of the party's activity. As regards the left wing, it could not completely dissociate itself from De Leon's sectarian views and tactics.

Eugene Debs and William D. Haywood, who led the left wing, were utterly devoted to the cause of the working class and were immensely popular among the workers. They organised and headed major strikes by railwaymen, miners, and other contingents of the working class in the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century. However, both Debs and Haywood were much stronger in day-to-day struggle than in socialist theory, and this affected their work. Their successes were modest and did not bring the American proletariat closer to decisive class battles.

The SP leadership did not set the party and the working class revolutionary aims, guarded the party against left influence, and hence opposed the organisational unity of the socialist movement. More, on pain of expulsion the SP prohibited its members and locals to take even an indirect part in the activities of other left organisa-

¹ Ray Ginger, *The Bending Cross*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1949, pp. 213-14.

² *The International Socialist Review*, Vol. 3, No. 4, October 1902, p. 224.

tions. In 1904 the party had 20,000 members.¹ At the presidential elections in 1900 its candidate, Eugene Debs, polled nearly 98,000 votes, while 402,000 people voted for him at the 1904 elections.

At the turn of the century, despite the certain numerical growth of the socialist organisations, the American proletariat did not have a mass revolutionary party prepared ideologically, politically, and organisationally for a successful fight against the bourgeoisie.

In Britain the Independent Labour Party had its base in the northern, most highly industrialised regions. Its programme called for collective property in the means of production, distribution and exchange, an eight-hour working day established by legislation, the prohibition of child labour, the introduction of universal suffrage, the abolition of the monarchy and abolition of the House of Lords, national referenda on important issues, and some other economic and social reforms.

The very fact that there was a party pursuing socialist aims mirrored the growth of revolutionary tendencies in the British labour movement. The lessons of the strike struggle and other actions showed the workers that unless they engaged in a political struggle their economic and social demands would remain unsatisfied. This was exactly what the Independent Socialists were urging. Many workers switched their support from the liberals to the Independent Labour Party. But having proclaimed the building of socialism in Britain as their goal, the leaders of the Independents rejected the idea of a social revolution. They argued that socialism could be attained solely by reforms.²

With their eyes focussed on winning seats in parliament, the ILP leaders quickly forgot their opposition to cooperation with the Liberals. Even J. Keir Hardie (who became an MP representing a workers' constituency) made election deals with them time and again.

In the latter half of the 1890s several (unsuccessful) attempts were made to form a mass political proletarian party in Britain by uniting the Social Democratic Federation, the Independent Labour Party, and the Fabian Society. On the initiative of the ILP the Trades Union Congress convened a conference that set up the Labour Representation Committee to campaign for the election of labour MPs.³ The charter adopted in Newcastle in 1903 defined the LRC as a federation of trade unions, local trade union councils, the ILP, and

¹ Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1952, p. 247.

² William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie*, Independent Labour Party Publication Department, London, 1925, p. 224.

³ *The Book of the Labour Party*, Vol. 1, Caxton Publishing Co., Ltd., London, 1925, pp. 10, 12.

the Fabian Society, with cooperative societies given the right to join. Membership was collective.

In 1904 its affiliates were 158 trade unions, 73 trade union councils, and some other organisations (the Social Democratic Federation resigned in 1901) with over 900,000 members.

The Committee's annual conferences established the voting procedure adopted by congresses of trade unions, under which the number of votes was proportionate to the membership of a given organisation. This meant that the leaders of the big trade unions were in a position to impose any resolution they wanted on the LRC conferences.

From the very outset there was a sharp struggle in the LRC over the question of a programme: the point at issue was whether the future party would be a mass socialist organisation or follow in the wake of the Liberals, whether it would have society's socialist reorganisation as its aim or confine itself to a struggle for reforms within the framework of capitalism. But no programme was adopted until 1918. The 1903 charter contained a provision on aims and tasks, speaking only of the election of labour MPs; nothing was said of what policy they were to pursue. After his election an MP had to abide solely by the decisions of the faction, which was thereby set above the LRC.

Although the LRC leaders had proclaimed that the labour MPs would be independent of the bourgeois parties, the constituent conference passed a resolution, moved by Keir Hardie, stating that the Labour Group in parliament "must embrace a readiness to cooperate with any party which, for the time being, may be engaged upon promoting legislation in the direct interest of labour and be equally ready to associate themselves with any party in opposing measures having an opposite tendency".¹ Conciliation-prone leaders used this provision to renounce an independent policy for the sake of collaboration with bourgeois parties.

The Social Democratic Federation felt there was nothing for it to do in an organisation that did not acknowledge itself socialist. It adopted a sectarian stand, withdrawing from the LRC, thereby depriving itself of an extremely effective medium for the propagation of its principles and finding itself more isolated than ever from mass organisations of the working class. By refusing to support the LRC candidates the SDF split the forces of the proletariat and hindered the attainment of unity in the labour movement.

Dissatisfaction with the policy of the SDF leadership headed by H. M. Hyndman mounted among the party's rank and file. This led to the formation of a group of left Socialists opposed to the sectarian,

¹ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

dogmatic policies of the leadership. In 1903 a segment of the Social Democrats (in Clyde) withdrew from the Federation and formed the Socialist Labour Party.

The *Belgian Labour Party*, which had 150,000 members in the middle of the first decade of this century was a complex of heterogeneous organisations united on the basis of collective membership. The political groups proper comprised only 6 per cent of the membership.¹ The cooperatives were a major component of the BLP and its financial bulwark. As in no other European country, they played a huge role in the establishment of the party. To quote Victor Serwy, then General Secretary of the General Cooperative Society of Belgium, "the cooperatives and the Labour Party represent one and the same thing not only for the working-class movement but also in the eyes of all public opinion".² In the early years of the twentieth century cooperative members comprised more than 39 per cent of the party's membership.³ The trade unions were, in terms of numerical strength, the largest section of the BLP.

In criticising this structure, Lenin noted that it was "an alliance of politically organised workers with politically unorganised workers, 'pure and simple' cooperators, trade unionists, etc. This is a big drawback of Belgium's labour movement."⁴

The BLP's programme—Declaration of Principles—combined Marxist propositions with some theses of Proudhon and Lassalle. Emile Vandervelde acknowledged that this programme was a reconciliation or, rather, a "synthesis of the doctrines that were locked in bitter struggle at congresses of the International".⁵

The reformist ideological and political make-up of the BLP was also reflected in its Rules, where it was stated rather vaguely that the party was "founded with the aim of uniting all of the nation's socialist and labour forces with the purpose, by joint effort, of improving the lot of the working class"⁶ and ultimately achieving its end goal—the total emancipation of the working people.

The BLP's specific organisational principles and the inconsistencies in its programme, which combined conflicting doctrines, could in no way serve as a dependable basis for the formation of a militant proletarian party capable of leading the working class in a successful

¹ *Une grande figure du mouvement ouvrier belge. Joseph Jacquemotte. Articles et interpellations parlementaires, 1912-1936*, Bruxelles, 1961, p. 26.

² Victor Serwy, *La coopération en Belgique*, vol. II, Bruxelles, 1959, p. 34.

³ H. de Man, L. de Brouckère, *Le mouvement ouvrier en Belgique*, Bruxelles, 1965, p. 64.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Belgian Strike", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, 1966, p. 235.

⁵ Jules Destrée and Emile Vandervelde, *Le Socialisme en Belgique*, V. Giard et E. Briere libraires-éditeurs, Paris, 1903, p. 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

struggle for socialism. The most glaring but not the sole illustration of this was the tactic it employed during the general strike of 1902.

At the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century there were two independent Social-Democratic parties—Austrian and Hungarian—in the *multinational Austro-Hungarian empire*.

Considerable influence was won by the Social-Democratic Party of Austria; in Austria proper it had more than 100,000 members in the early years of the century.

The struggle of the Austrian Social-Democrats for universal suffrage, particularly in Bohemia, led to a partial electoral reform in 1896. For the first time ever 14 Social-Democrats were elected in 1897.¹ This victory gave the working class new means of political struggle. However, the party increasingly shifted its accent to parliamentary activity and election deals with bourgeois parties.

Set up as a revolutionary Marxist party, the SDPA quite quickly came under the influence of reformism and nationalism in ideological, political, and organisational questions. Its Prague congress (1896) resolved to turn the hitherto integral party into a federative union of individual national Social-Democratic parties. This resolution was formalised in the Rules adopted at the 1897 congress. The party henceforth consisted of six national groups: Austrian, Czech, Polish, Ukrainian, Yugoslav, and Italian. These had their own leading centres and enjoyed broad autonomy. The Executive Committee was composed of representatives of these groups, with the Austrian group commanding the largest number of votes, four, the Czech group three, the Polish two, and the others one each. The sole prerogative of the congress, convened once in two years, was to decide the most general questions concerning the programme and organisation.

As a consequence of the new Rules, workers living in one and the same neighbourhood and, in many cases, working at one and the same factory but speaking different languages found themselves in different party organisations. This weakened the party's organisational cohesion and mobility, undermined the internationalist unity of the workers, and gave bourgeois-nationalist ideology much easier access to the working people.

A further distortion of the Marxist approach to the nationalities problems was seen in the SDPA special programme on the nationalities question passed at the Brünn congress in 1899. Its theoretical basis was the SDPA theorists' idealistic understanding that nations were cultural and spiritual entities regardless of the place of residence of

¹ E. L. Uryas, *The Working-Class Movement in Austria-Hungary in 1867-1914*, Moscow, 1959, p. 22 (in Russian).

their members. The Brünn programme stated that the party championed the equality of nations and condemned national discrimination. But these positive propositions were founded on the contradictory aspiration to fit an extraterritorial national-cultural autonomy and the limited territorial self-administration of nations into the framework of the Hapsburg empire. The programme's point of departure was the preservation of the artificially created Austro-Hungarian monarchy that was suppressing the free national development of its subject peoples.

The SDPA's switch to opportunist positions entailed the renunciation of the Hainfeld programme and the adoption of a new programme at the Vienna congress in 1901. The thesis that the proletariat had to seize political power was dropped, as were the propositions that the party should not absolutise the parliamentary form of struggle and that it should use the parliamentary rostrum for revolutionary agitation. All mention of revolution and the revolutionary struggle was avoided.

In the Hainfeld programme it was clearly stated that the party would foster a socialist consciousness in the working-class movement. The new programme declared that "with the development of capitalism the proletariat comes to the realisation that socialism is possible and necessary".¹

This mirrored the view that the consciousness of the workers grows spontaneously, whereas in fact this is not possible without the influence of the Socialists.

Victor Adler, one of the party's leading personalities, propounded the view that Social-Democracy could "strike root and nest" in bourgeois society and gradually bring the working class to power.²

In *Austria's Czech lands* the working-class movement was, by and large, on the ascendant at the close of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century. The Czech working class conducted militant May Day actions against Austrian absolutism. In the mining, textile, glass, and some other industries there were big strikes making not only economic but political demands (for instance, universal suffrage). Among the first-ever Socialists elected to parliament in 1897 five were Czechs.

However, the growth of the working-class movement was inhibited by the influence of opportunists in the leadership of the Czech Social-Democratic Party. In the party journal they declared their agreement with Bernstein's revisionist views, rejected key, fundamental

¹ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Oesterreich. Abgehalten zu Wien vom 2. bis 6. November 1901*, Wien, 1901, S. 3.

² Victor Adler, *Articles, Speeches, Letters*, Issue 1, Leningrad-Moscow, 1924, pp. 184, 185 (Russian translation).

propositions of Marxist theory, and zealously propounded what they termed the "evolutionary way to socialism". One of the party's leaders, Anton Nemec, asserted that under the new socio-political conditions it was superfluous to resort to violence in the class struggle, arguing that the working class could achieve its aims by exclusively peaceful means.

On questions of organisation, the opportunists in the leadership of the Czech Social-Democratic Party took a stand for national separatism. The Czech reformists led the trade unions along the same path, thereby weakening the working-class movement. A congress of trade unions in Prague (1897) passed a resolution proclaiming the need for "a separate Czechoslovak trade union organisation".¹

The Czech reformists did not insist on an immediate settlement of the nationalities question in the interests of the working people. They reduced the substance of the nationalities question in Bohemia one-sidedly and therefore misguidedly to a struggle between the Czech and the German bourgeoisie, closing their eyes to the fact that it was none other than the working masses who bore the burden of national oppression and that in the period of transition to imperialism the social content of the problems of nationalities had grown especially acute. Yet the opportunists separated the nationalities question from the class problem and postponed the settlement of nationalities problems indefinitely.

This was used by the Czech bourgeoisie, which charged the Social-Democrats with "betraying national interests". By posing as the sole champion of national liberation, the bourgeoisie drew a section of the workers into organisations engaging in nationalistic demagoguery and calling for class collaboration in order to divert the working people from the socialist movement.

The gulf between the opportunist leadership and the rank and file of the Czech Social-Democratic Party widened. The latter regarded an open class struggle as the means for achieving the basic aims of the working class. At a congress held at the close of 1904 a recommendation that a general strike could be a means in the struggle for universal suffrage was adopted in spite of opposition from the party leaders.

From 1890 onwards the *Hungarian Social-Democratic Party* was guided by the Declaration of Principles, a document based mainly on the Hainfeld programme of the SDPA. The drawbacks of the Declaration reflected the party's ideological and political level of the day: the main shortcoming was that it did not satisfactorily formulate two basic issues—agrarian and nationalities—which were of decisive significance for the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

¹ *A History of Czechoslovakia*, Vol. II, p. 142.

That revolutionary feeling was growing among the working class was seen as early as the 1890 May Day demonstrations. In addition to Budapest, where 60,000 working people demonstrated, mass actions took place in 14 cities, including Slovak towns—Bratislava, Kosice, and others. As these proletarian actions spread the HSDP won increasing influence among urban and rural workers (the peasant poor). The authorities responded with an intensification of repressions against the Social-Democrats; at the close of the 1890s these repressions developed into ruthless terror.

During the economic crisis of 1900, which was accompanied by an aggravation of class and national oppression, there was an upswing of political activity by the proletariat and the peasants in Hungary. The first general strike, involving 40,000 railway workers, took place in 1904.

The HSDP adopted a new programme at its congress in 1903. It was proclaimed that the aim of the Hungarian working class was to win political power in order to build socialism: this was a significant theoretical advance. However, the programme did not couple this aim with the immediate political objectives formulated in it: universal suffrage; freedom of association, assembly, and the press; complete equality of all the nations inhabiting Hungary; the disbandment of the regular armed forces and the arming of the people, and so on. It did not raise the question of the need for revolution and did not define its character or the role and tasks of the proletariat in it. The peasants' demand for a division of the land was not taken into account. The party conducted agitation for a democratic republic but this slogan, as the demand for Hungary's complete independence, was not included in the programme.

The Hungarian working class was weakened by national segregation. There were bitter disagreements between the Hungarian and Slovak Social-Democrats. The HSDP leaders refused to help the latter start a socialist press. Nonetheless, in October 1904 the Slovak Socialists began the publication of a monthly journal, around which organisations began to take shape. A struggle developed "between steadfast internationalism and bourgeois-nationalistic views, which were penetrating the working-class movement like an infectious disease".¹

According to the Rules adopted in 1894 any person could be a member who "recognises the Party's basic principles and within the measure of his possibilities supports the Party materially or morally".² This was evidence of the vagueness of HSDP's demands on its

¹ János Kádár, *Selected Articles and Speeches (1957-1960)*, Moscow, 1960, p. 298 (Russian translation).

² *A History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Working-Class Movement*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1970, p. 39 (in Russian).

members, and it was characteristic of most of the Social-Democratic parties at the turn of the century. In terms of organisation, the HSDP relied entirely on local trade unions and other workers' associations. There were no primary organisations; instead there were representatives elected mainly by trade-union members. The party leadership was in constant contact with the workers' study circles in Budapest but had no regular contacts with the peripheral areas. Party activity was obstructed by never-ending crises in the leadership caused by the unrelaxed efforts of the opportunists to gain control of the party.

The 1903 congress resolved that membership of the party required recognition and propagation of its principles and programme, (and material and moral support: all persons affiliated to trade unions were also considered party members. The duties of a party member were thus extended but no clear-cut distinction was made between the party and the mass uncommitted trade unions.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were two socialism-oriented parties in the *Kingdom of Poland*: the Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and the Polish Socialist Party. Both functioned underground.

The Social-Democratic Party was a strictly centralised, numerically small cadre organisation composed of professional revolutionaries, party functionaries, propagandists, and publicists. After the brutal repressions of the mid-1890s it was not until 1899 that it restored its network of secret organisations, for instance in Warsaw (where Felix Dzerzhinski was actively working), Czeszochowa, and Lodz, and the Main Board was reconstituted. In 1900 it adopted a new name—the Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. At the time the 3rd congress was convened (November 1901) it had more than a thousand members.¹ It had committees in all the principal industrial centres of the Kingdom of Poland. In Cracow it had a Foreign Committee, which was headed by Dzerzhinski from 1902 onward.

The party's work was based on the proposition that the Polish working-class movement was inseparable from the Russian. This was later noted by Lenin, who wrote that the Polish Social-Democrats created "for the first time a purely proletarian party in Poland" and proclaimed "the extremely important principle that the Polish and the Russian workers must maintain the closest alliance in their class struggle".² With this platform the party resolutely fought nationalist ideology. But its leaders underrated the significance of the problem of national independence. Their stand, reflected in the party programme, was influenced by Rosa Luxemburg, who wrongly

¹ *A History of the Second International*, Vol. II, p. 59.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, 1972, p. 434.

believed that the formation of nation states in that period would conflict with the laws of history.

As for the Polish Socialist Party it considered that its main and priority task was to ensure Poland's secession from Russia. It saw the subsequent advance to socialism as a slow evolution. There was an increasingly stronger left wing that wanted revolutionary reforms and sought a mass base. However, the party's policy was determined by its right-wing leaders: Boleslaw Antoni Jedrzejowski, Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz, and Jozef Pilsudski.

In *Germany* the Polish socialist organisations formed the Polish Socialist Party in the 1890s on territory held by Prussia. On the whole its ideological and political guidelines coincided with the Erfurt programme of the SDPG. It held that its principal aim was to restore Poland to independence as a democratic state; there was also a strong national-separatist trend, but in the years we are considering it cooperated quite closely with the SDPG and was regarded as part of the latter. Due to repressions and the language barrier the party did not have any substantial influence.

The *Polish Socialists in Galicia*, then part of Austria, very successfully disseminated socialist ideas, but the general trend of the SDPA towards demarcation according to nationalities also affected Galicia. The 1897 Lvov congress proclaimed the independence of the Polish Social-Democratic Party of Galicia and Teschen-Silesia; this was followed by national demarcation within the party itself. Shortly afterwards the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party was formed in Galicia, with the result that the unity of the Polish and Ukrainian workers was undermined. In the Polish party the leadership was seized by Ignac Daszynski and other hard-line opportunists.

In *Romania* a Social-Democratic Workers' Party was founded in 1893, a development that made for a further expansion of the working-class movement. However, the party's activities and programme did not dovetail with the aspirations of advanced proletarians, for they were confined to democratic aims and concentrated on parliamentary methods of struggle. Another serious drawback was that it ignored the question of a revolutionary settlement of the agrarian problem that was so vital in Romania.

In order to counter the mounting discontent of the party's revolutionary wing, the opportunist leaders disbanded the party on the grounds that in a backward country there were no prospects for a struggle for socialism. In the early years of the twentieth century the Romanian working class thus had no national political organisation. However, socialist study circles continued to function. These circles included Stefan Gheorghiu, Dumitru Marinesco, I. C. Frimu, and other militants, who later revived the organised working-class

movement in the country. On the contrary, publication of the socialist newspaper *Romania Muncitoare* was started in 1902.

In *Serbia* a Leadership Committee, whose aim was to found a Social-Democratic Party, was formed in the mid-1890s. Ruthless repressions hampered and then cut short its activities. But in the early years of the twentieth century the intensified exploitation of the working people and the spread of a spontaneous working-class movement brought the first workers' organisations to life.

The Belgrade Workers' Society was formed in March 1901 on the initiative of the carpenter R. Dragovic and the student D. Tuzovic. Similar organisations sprang up in some other cities. The Leadership Committee was restored; an underground Central Committee, which assumed the leadership of trade unions and of educational and other workers' organisations, was formed in May 1902.¹

A Marxist group (Dragovic, Tuzovic, Trisa Katslerovic, and others), which wanted an independent proletarian political party, got the upper hand in the drawing up of the programme, organisational, and tactical principles of the working-class movement. A congress held in Belgrade in August 1903 set up a trade-union association (Central Workers' Union) and the Serbian Social-Democratic Party. It adopted the party Rules and programme, which was in the main based on the Erfurt programme of the SDPG. The party's formation ushered in a new, higher stage of the Serbian proletariat's liberation struggle.

Three trends took shape in the newly founded party. The opportunist wing (Jovan Skerlic, K. Jovanovic and others) held that the Serbian working class could not pursue an independent proletarian policy and sought to make the Serbian Social-Democratic Party play the role of accessory of the bourgeois opposition parties. Some spokesmen of this wing went so far as to suggest the disbandment of the party and the preservation solely of the trade union organisation.

The Marxists, who were familiar with the struggle of the Russian revolutionaries, championed the political independence of the working class and opposed the attempts to confine the trade unions to a purely economic struggle. The reformists and syndicalists were outvoted at the 2nd Congress of the Central Workers' Union in 1904 and then at the 2nd Congress of the Serbian Social-Democratic Party in the same year. Refusing to abide by the party's decisions they engaged in factional, divisive activities. In December 1904 the Central Committee expelled the opportunist Jovanovic-Skerlic group from the party.

The *Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party* was formed in 1894 when the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party merged with the

¹ Trisa Katslerovic, *Prve samostalne radnicke organizacije u Srbije*, Beograd, 1950, pp. 55-56.

Social-Democratic Union. The numerically strongest contingent in it consisted of petty-bourgeois elements, who for some time managed to make the party follow the political guidelines set by them. During the next few years the party was mainly oriented on minor reforms and the winning of seats in parliament. The opportunists attempted to force the party to renounce a specifically proletarian form of struggle—strikes—which they regarded as an “extreme means” permissible only under extraordinary circumstances.

The reformist leaders were opposed by revolutionary Marxists headed by D. Blagoev. On the latter's insistence it was decided at the party's 4th congress in 1897 to repudiate the election agreements with bourgeois parties practised in the past. Moreover, the Marxists secured a resolution on the publication of a party newspaper for workers. This newspaper, *Rabotnicheski vestnik*, began to appear in the same year with G. Kirkov, a dedicated revolutionary, as its editor-in-chief.

The struggle between the left and right elements in the party grew increasingly acute. The problems of maintaining the party's proletarian character, limiting access to it for petty-bourgeois elements, and making higher ideological and organisational demands on its members were brought into prominence. This was resisted by the opportunists. The journal *Obshcho delo*, headed by Y. Sakyzov¹ and started in 1900, became their ideological centre. Sakyzov and his associates adopted Bernstein's revisionist views as their guideline. At its 8th congress in 1901 the party passed a resolution by an overwhelming majority condemning the *Obshcho delo* group and underscoring the party's class, proletarian character. It stated that party organisations had to be strengthened and that strict discipline was indispensable. But no move was taken to expel the revisionists, and this protracted the final dissociation from them.

In their polemic with the opportunists D. Blagoev, G. Georgiev, G. Kirkov, and others said that there had to be an efficient, centralised party organisation functioning not as a “society for self-education” but as a centre disseminating socialist ideas and fighting for their embodiment. They pointed out that the revisionist misrepresentation of Marxism had a disastrous effect on the party's practical work, and urged that the party should admit only convinced proponents of socialism prepared to fight for the implementation of its programme. However, while they objected quite reasonably to the opportunists' demand that the party should make no restrictions

¹ Sakyzov accused Blagoev and his associates of having a narrow (*tesny* in Bulgarian) understanding of Marxism as distinct from his (Sakyzov's) own views, which he presented as a creative, broad interpretation of Marxism. The revolutionary Marxists became known as *Tesnyaki*, while the opportunists were called *Obshchedeltsi*.

to the admittance of peasants and artisans, which in the situation of those years would have eroded the party's proletarian character, they underrated the revolutionary potential of the peasants and did not see the need for including a provision in the party programme on ways and means of resolving agrarian problems in the interests of the working peasants and thereby winning them to the side of the working class in the struggle for socialism.

The work of the revolutionary Marxists attracted hundreds of advanced workers to the party and thereby strengthened its Marxist core. The Central Committee elected at the 9th congress (1902) consisted of three revolutionary Marxists and two members of the *Obshcho delo* group.

In the struggle against the opportunists the Bulgarian revolutionary Socialists used material from Lenin's *Iskra*, which they translated and published in Bulgaria. A large contribution to this struggle was made by Blagoev's *Opportunism or Socialism* (1902) written under the influence of Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* In this book Blagoev noted the significance of unity in the party and raised the question of purging it of petty-bourgeois opportunism. A split took place first in the parliamentary faction and then in the Sofia party organisation. In March 1903 the revolutionary majority in the CC appealed to all local organisations to break with the opportunists.

All or most of the members of 38 organisations (of a total of 52) functioning in working-class centres took the side of the Marxists and expelled the opportunists from their ranks. Elsewhere, the Marxists formed separate organisations that supported the party's revolutionary leadership.

The 10th congress (July 1903), at which only the organisations of revolutionary Marxists were represented, approved the political line of the CC majority headed by Blagoev and expelled the opportunists from the party. It adopted new Rules based on the principles of democratic centralism.¹ Under these Rules only those "who accept the basic principles of the Party programme and help to implement the programme as a whole" could be admitted to membership. The party's proletarian, revolutionary character was clearly underscored in the congress resolutions on tactics and on the trade unions.

The split signified that the proletarian revolutionary spirit had triumphed over petty-bourgeois opportunism, that Marxism had got the upper hand over revisionism in the Bulgarian working-class movement. After the split the party adopted the name the Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party (Tesny Socialists), while the opportunists, who convened their own congress in the same year, called themselves the Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party

¹ K. Shorova, *Rashcheplenieto na BRSDP prez 1903*, Sofia, 1955, pp. 127-35.

(Broad Socialists). The Tesnyaki party specified its programme, deleting a number of reformist provisions on which the opportunists had insisted. The party's social composition improved: as early as the close of 1903 the percentage of workers among its members reached 51. It followed the path of becoming a new type of party, although a complete restructuring was still to take place.

The cleansing was of immense significance for the party's future, ensuring its development as a Marxist revolutionary vanguard of the Bulgarian working class.

In *Japan* the conditions for founding a socialist party took shape gradually at the close of the 1890s. Within ten years (1894-1903) the numerical strength of the industrial workers rose by 100,000 (reaching nearly half a million) and strikes grew more frequent. The Socialist League, founded at the beginning of 1900, had firm links to the workers and actively disseminated the Marxist teaching. As one of the leaders of a major strike of railway engineers and stokers said, "without socialism the working-class movement is like Buddha without eyes. Socialism is the ideal of the working-class movement."¹ The Socialist League was part of the democratic movement aimed at achieving universal suffrage. A reactionary law of 1900 greatly hindered but did not halt the activities of the Japanese Socialists.

Sen Katayama and his associates established close contacts on the international scene. In 1900, having no opportunity to attend the congress of the Second International in Paris, he sent a message of greetings, writing in part: "May the congress, at least from this message, learn that socialist thought has struck root also in the distant East."² Katayama was elected *in absentia* to the first International Socialist Bureau set up by the Paris congress.

These links were part of the extensive organisational work conducted by militants of the Japanese working-class movement in preparation for the founding of the first Social-Democratic Party in Japan. It was founded (under the name Shakai Minshuto) in May 1901, but was immediately banned. At the time it was founded its demands included the abolition of class society, the socialisation of land, capital, and communications, political equality, free tuition, and the destruction of armaments.

The Socialist League continued functioning even after it was banned. In the latter half of 1901 Katayama published a series of articles about the condition and struggle of the Japanese proletariat in the

¹ Sen Katayama, *Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1964, p. 320 (Russian translation).

² D. I. Goldberg, "Sen Katayama and Japanese Socialist Literature (Rodo Shakai) in 1897-1902", *Historico-Philological Studies. A Collection of Articles in Memory of Academician N. I. Konrad*, Moscow, 1974, p. 259 (in Russian).

German, French, and US workers' press. He wrote that in Japan "the proletariat is growing stronger and the day is not far off when we, the Japanese Socialists, like our brothers in the West, will enter the class struggle with valour and faith in victory".¹ These words came true very soon, with the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in 1904, when, headed by Sen Katayama, the Japanese Socialists adopted a consistently internationalist stand.

* * *

The workers' parties of various structural types and diverse ideological and political hues and orientations that existed at the turn of the century worked on the task of "elementary organisation" of the proletariat and "expanding the influence of socialism",² and waged a struggle to improve the condition of the working people. These parties gradually advanced in efficiency and strength. But in the new historical situation they were unable to prepare the working class for a socialist revolution, to rally allies around it, head all the revolutionary forces, and ensure the winning of power by the proletariat. Inadequately centralised, these parties disregarded the principle of the ideological unity and cohesion of the party ranks and did not venture to purge themselves of the revisionists, who under the motto of "freedom of criticism" sought to erode Social-Democracy from within. In 1904 Lenin wrote that the "fundamental characteristics of opportunism in matters of organisation... are, *mutatis mutandis* (with appropriate modifications), to be observed in all the Social-Democratic parties in the world".³

In the early years of the twentieth century the situation demanded revolutionary workers' parties of a new type capable of heading and bringing to a victorious completion the struggle against the monopoly bourgeoisie, which to preserve its rule had set up a ramified repressive state apparatus, a powerful military machine, and an armoury of economic, political, and ideological means of disuniting and disarming the working people. The new type of workers' party had to be not only the advanced, organised and politically conscious part of the working class but also the highest form of its organisation, directing all other proletarian organisations and all forms of the proletariat's struggle.

That type of party could not confine itself to recognition of Marxism's classical propositions. It had to develop the Marxist doctrine

¹ Ibid., p. 262.

² V. I. Lenin, "Dead Chauvinism and Living Socialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 98-99.

³ V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 397.

creatively and, on that theoretical foundation, map out the political line strategically oriented on a socialist revolution, on the winning of political power by the proletariat. It had to abide staunchly by the principles of democratic centralism, make its decisions mandatory, strengthen conscious discipline and ensure the durable unity and purity of its ranks.

No such party existed in the international working-class movement at the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. It was still to be founded. This was accomplished under Lenin's leadership in Russia.

TRADE UNIONS AND OTHER MASS ORGANISATIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS

The trade unions were a major force behind the mass actions of the working people. The cooperatives, youth and women's leagues, cultural societies, and other organisations were likewise growing more active. They had been brought to life by the workers' aspiration to improve their condition, by their thirst for knowledge and culture, which the bourgeoisie sought to monopolise. Thanks to the untiring efforts of the Social-Democrats socialist ideas struck root in these organisations, and the trade unions and the youth, women's and other workers' associations became part and parcel of the general revolutionary front.

The growth of the proletariat's mass organisations was particularly marked after the formation of the Second International, which during its best years did much to organise the struggle of the workers of different countries, to unite the workers in a world-wide army of labour. Noting this development, Lenin wrote that "the Second International ... has achievements ... which the class-conscious worker will never renounce—the creation of mass working-class organisations—cooperative, trade union and political".¹

THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT

At the close of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century there was a further growth of the role played by the trade unions in the class struggle; pre-monopoly capitalism's evolution into imperialism made it imperative that the working class should raise the level of struggle against the new forms of exploitation, against the overall intensification of economic and political oppression. In *What Is to Be Done?*, written in 1902, Lenin formulated the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Third International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 504.

ideological and organisational guidelines for the revolutionary trade unions, stressing that these unions should embrace the largest possible number of the working people. "Trade-union organisations," he wrote, "not only can be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle but can also become a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organisation."¹

However, this requirement was not met by the trade unions everywhere and in all cases. The opportunist leaders of the trade union movement in Western Europe and North America erected barriers to the influence of revolutionary ideas and sought to confine the role of the trade unions to narrow economic tasks. But in many cases developments, chiefly the persevering efforts of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, yielded the opposite results.

The general upswing of the proletariat's class struggle and also the successes of the trade unions in improving the condition of the organised masses led to a sharp increase of the growth rate of the trade union membership at the close of the nineteenth century. In the course of ten years (1890-1900) the number of trade unions rose 2.5-fold in Germany and doubled in Britain.

This rapid numerical growth of trade unions in these and other countries, for instance, Spain, the Netherlands, and Austria-Hungary, continued during the initial years of the twentieth century. This trend was especially marked in the USA, where in 1904 the number of workers organised in trade unions reached 2,073,000.²

But, on the whole, the organisational level of the proletariat remained rather low, and in some countries it was hardly worth talking about. In 1904 the proportion of workers organised in trade unions was a mere 7 per cent in Belgium, 8 per cent in Austria, 9.9 per cent in Sweden, 27 per cent in Germany, and 33 per cent in Britain. Denmark was the only country where 50 per cent of the workers belonged to trade unions.³

To all intents and purposes the huge mass of farm labourers, white-collar workers, and teachers remained outside the influence of the trade unions.

There was a number of reasons for this level of organisation. One was, we have already noted, the fierce resistance of entrepreneurs, who stopped at nothing to prevent the workers from forming associations. Also a significant cause was the class-consciousness level of some segments of the proletariat, the isolationism of some unions

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 456-57.

² *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, Washington, 1960, p. 97.

³ Estimated on the basis of census statistics and figures on the numerical strength of trade unions.

that were still trying to preserve craft-unionism and keep unskilled workers out of their ranks, and also the passiveness of many women workers, who comprised a large proportion of the industrial proletariat. Lastly, the trade unions were prevented from attracting more members by harassment by the bourgeois state. It did not merely continue doing everything to hold up the growth of the trade union movement, to prevent the trade unions from asserting their right to represent workers and head strikes. Harassment of trade unions was stepped up in the closing years of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The example was set by the ruling circles of the USA and Britain (the Taff Vale case).

The National Association of Industrialists, founded in the USA in 1895, campaigned for the abolition of trade unions, for an "open shop", and "free bargaining" between factory owners and each individual worker. This was an attempt to divest the proletariat of a weapon that could somehow restrict exploitation, the weapon of organisation and solidarity. The reactionary US press joined in the campaign against the trade unions, charging them with violating freedom, coercing individuals, and encroaching upon the "sacred right of property".

In the USA the courts systematically invalidated the laws of individual states prohibiting the dismissal of workers on grounds of belonging to trade unions. In 1902 the US Supreme Court ruled that a strike in Dunbury, staged to secure recognition of a trade union and reinforced with a boycott of the goods produced by the firm concerned, was a transgression of the Sherman Act. As a result, the trade union was penalised with a huge fine.

The capitalists saw harassment as a means of breaking the militant spirit of the trade unions and turning them into an instrument of "class collaboration". In Western Europe bourgeois ideologists wrote a number of books at the end of the nineteenth century in which they put forward a new view on trade unions. For instance, Werner Sombart wrote that the aim of destroying the trade unions should be dropped, contending that their activities did not go beyond the framework of the existing system.¹ This was to be the point of departure of the imperialist bourgeoisie's social policy of steering the trade unions into "social partnership" and "integration" in the capitalist system, a course alien to the working class.

But class experience made it increasingly clear that no proletarian organisation could stand aloof from the contradiction between labour and capital and isolate itself from politics. Through bourgeois legislation, the repressive bodies, and other agencies politics constant-

¹ Werner Sombart, *Die gewerbliche Arbeiterfrage*, Leipzig, G. J. Göschensche Verlagshandlung, 1904, S. 40, 69.

ly penetrated the trade unions, compelling their leaders, even those who spoke publicly of their antipathy for political struggles, to take part in them. In the autumn of 1901 terror tactics by the authorities and industrialists of San Francisco induced 69 West Coast trade unions of the USA to set up the Trade-Union Labor Party of the State and County of San-Francisco at their convention. This organisation was successful at the very first elections: its candidate was elected mayor. Vigorous political activity led to a growth of the trade union membership in the city. But, as distinct from Britain, in the USA the formation of a political organisation with the trade unions as its base did not spread throughout the nation.

In reply to official harassment the workers staged strikes to defend their trade unions against the class enemy and firmly establish them as legal associations of the working class. These were political strikes. They opened the eyes of organised workers to the fact that the system of wage slavery and bourgeois political rule were the cause of all their material poverty and hardships. In many countries the trade unions acquired extensive experience of staging strikes that brought large numbers of unorganised workers into their ranks. The workers were usually most successful where the trade unions closely cooperated with the Marxist party in the given country.

Further, the exacerbation of the struggle between the revolutionary, consistently Marxist and the right-opportunist, revisionist trends was reflected in the trade unions as well. The "tendencies towards 'pure trade-unionism' of the British, i.e., absolutely bourgeois type",¹ of which Lenin wrote, began to surface also in the policies of the trade unions that had originally been influenced by the class-oriented revolutionary forces. To a large extent this was due to the "institutionalisation" of the trade unions, to their acquisition of an official status and the ensuing bureaucratisation and embourgeoisation of their large bureaucratic apparatus.

The degeneration of the trade union leadership was most conspicuous in the USA, where from the outset the mass working-class movement had been developing in isolation from socialist organisations. Along with representatives of big capital, the leaders of the AF of L took part in the activities of the National Civic Federation, in which it was secretly agreed that in exchange for recognition of the trade unions and some concessions to them Samuel Gompers and his colleagues would help to combat the revolutionary tendency in the US labour movement and desist from organising unskilled workers, who in those days comprised the majority of the factory proletariat.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Jena Congress of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 293.

In Europe the trade union movement had not yet come to this. But even there the spirit of conciliation began to spread among the trade union leaders. In some of them the natural striving to keep the strike movement free of adventurism turned into a policy aimed at curtailing the movement. This was stated bluntly in a document of the Board of Danish Trade Unions: "The strike is a weapon of the workers for improving their condition, but under present-day conditions they have no need for strikes."¹ It was demagogically argued that trade union funds could best be used to help the needy and the unemployed.

The leading bodies of the trade unions tightened their control over the adoption of decisions to strike. This was particularly the case in Germany. In 1904 the journal of the General Commission of Free Trade Unions wrote: "In view of the greatly increased risk of strikes any amicable agreement is a larger achievement than victory after months of struggle."² This suited the tactics of the industrialists, who were determined to "tame" the trade unions, to make them settle disputes by "peaceful" means.

In Britain the trade union leaders sought to carry all disputes to arbitration courts or to so-called conciliation chambers that were set up in 1896. In these bodies the role of "unbiased" judges was played by government officials. Conciliatory settlements of conflicts developed into a system embodying "civic peace". Only a few of the conflicts considered by the arbitration courts and conciliation chambers erupted into strikes. Under the rules adopted by the trade unions a strike could be declared only after all means of conciliation were exhausted.

But the danger of "conciliation" from the right was not the sole peril encountered by the trade union movement in those years. In Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, and some Latin American countries the trade unions continued to be more or less strongly influenced by anarcho-syndicalism.

Lenin called anarcho-syndicalism "revisionism from the left".³ Although it sprang from the desire of the working people for vigorous action, anarcho-syndicalism, just as anarchism in general, was an expression of the "anger, impatience, and vacillations of the petty-bourgeoisie that had no prospects".⁴ Although militant and prepared to fight, the anarcho-syndicalists were, because of their leftist, ad-

¹ *Zweiter internationaler Bericht über die Gewerkschaftsbewegung, 1904*, Berlin, 1906, S. 42.

² *Correspondenzblatt*, 1904, No. 19, S. 308.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 38.

⁴ Jacques Duclos, *Anarchistes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, Editions sociales, Paris, 1968, p. 18.

venturist actions and verbiage, a serious obstacle to proper action by the trade unions, preventing the latter from acting together with the revolutionary parties of the working class. The syndicalist calls for the "autonomy" of local trade union organisations, the decentralisation of the trade unions, and the renunciation of mutual-benefit and other special funds brought nothing but harm, because they undermined organisational work aimed at setting up large and strong trade unions.

In many cases anarcho-syndicalism was the workers' response to reformist tendencies among trade union leaders. This was seen most strikingly in the French trade union movement, in which in 1901 the anarcho-syndicalists took over the leadership of the nation's largest trade union centre, the General Confederation of Labour, as a direct result of the workers' condemnation of the Socialist minister Millerand and the GCL reformist leaders supporting him. In this situation many working people felt that there was something in the anarcho-syndicalist insistence on renouncing participation in the political struggle, seeing it as opposition to opportunist socialism.

The anarcho-syndicalists profited by the French workers' gravitation towards unity and in 1902 merged the GCL and the Federation of Labour Exchanges under their leadership. Of course, this was an advance in the development of the trade union movement, but the anarcho-syndicalist leaders, who had no confidence in the creative potentialities of the masses, could ensure neither genuine unity among the French workers nor their success in the class struggle. Most of the syndicates steered clear of organising strikes, coming forward as strike leaders only in rare cases; also an obstacle to the spread of the strike struggle was that the central trade union bodies had little influence on the course of that struggle on account of the syndicalist theory that local trade unions should enjoy broad independence.

A favourite trick of the opportunists in the trade union movement at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century (and in this they were at one with the reformists and the anarcho-syndicalists) was to proclaim the so-called neutrality of trade unions, in other words, their dissociation from the political party of the proletariat. In the prevailing situation this came into conflict with the vital interests of the working class because the trade unions, which were still weak and subjected to ferocious attacks, could fight successfully only in close contact with the socialist parties, most of which adhered to class positions.

When strikes were staged in Russia the Social-Democratic groups and the League of Struggle brought the workers round to realising that their interests could not be reconciled with those of the industrialists and the government, and helped them to set up strike committees and form strike and resistance funds. These militant organi-

sations were the direct forerunners of the trade unions. They usually acted at individual factories; but there were also city societies uniting the workers of an industry. An example is the Kharkov Mutual-Aid Society of Engineering Workers, which in 1904 had 1,300 members, and which eventually developed into a trade union. In Moscow a strike fund was set up in 1896; in addition to paying out allowances to strikers, money from this fund was used for the purchase of literature. For their tasks and composition these organisations were very similar to trade unions, but they differed from the latter by their lack of formal organisation. The first trade unions sprang up in Russia at the next stage of the struggle for emancipation.

A positive aspect in the development of the trade union movement of those years was the growth of its level of internationalisation. This process was speeded considerably after the Zurich congress of the Second International (1893), which passed a resolution on the "national and international organisation of trade unions". It stressed the need for the establishment of an international federation of organised trades, through the agreement of national federations, so as to join organisations of different countries in one union. The London congress of the Second International (1896) likewise closely considered international forms of trade union activity, including solidarity between the trade unions of different countries during strikes.

In 1900 there were 17 international trade associations (secretariats). Many of these spread their influence to a large number of countries. However, they confined themselves chiefly to gathering information about the condition of the working people, wages, the length of the working day, and so forth. Material aid to national organisations during a strike was not regular, for none of these secretariats had permanent strike funds. They maintained no links among themselves.

With the emergence and consolidation of national trade union centres the way was cleared to setting up an international organisation to unite them. A step towards this goal was the conference of representatives of German, British, Belgian, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish trade union centres in Copenhagen in August 1901. It decided to convene such conferences periodically for the purpose of establishing closer links between the trade unions of different countries. Moreover, it formed a permanent agency, the International Secretariat of Trade Unions, to function in the intervals between conferences. The International Secretariat at once came under the influence of the German trade unions, and in 1904 their leader became its General Secretary. This was what largely determined the predominance of reformism in the new organisation and prevented it from becoming a militant headquarters of the trade unions during the period of sharp class battles in the early twentieth century.

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The closing decades of the nineteenth century saw large numbers of women taking jobs in industry. Unbridled exploitation and the denial of political and civil rights to women workers made the women's question an acute social problem.

Lenin repeatedly showed that there was an indivisible link between the triumph of socialism and the social emancipation of women, seeing the latter as a major force in the proletariat's struggle for a radical transformation of society. He wrote: "The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it."¹

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the women's movement split into two opposite trends: proletarian and bourgeois-feminist. "The class antithesis," August Bebel wrote, "which draws a dividing line between the capitalist class and the working class and which, when our relations are aggravated, develops further is thus seen in the women's movement as well."² The membership of the feminist organisations consisted chiefly of women belonging to the bourgeois intelligentsia, while the political stand of these organisations did not range beyond the limits of bourgeois-liberal reformism. This was what induced the revolutionary Social-Democrats to urge proletarian women to set up their own class organisation and actively participate in the common revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

In Britain, Germany, Austria, and other countries women workers took part in strikes and demonstrations, demanding better working conditions. Characteristic in this respect was the strike at London match factories in July 1888, in which women workers won a certain pay rise, and the strike of 3,000 women workers at a rubber articles factory in Silvertown in September-December 1889. The demands included a wage raise for women and children. This strike led to the formation of a union of young women workers.

In the USA women workers began forming independent women's trade unions as early as 1870 because the character of the US trade union movement made it difficult for them to join general unions. In 1880 some unions began to admit women as equal members. In 1881 the women's trade unions affiliated themselves to the Order of the Knights of Labor.

In other countries (Germany, Britain) the first attempts to organise women workers were made in the 1890s, but these unions still functioned, as a rule, hand in hand with feminist organisations and

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women, November 19, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 181.

² August Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., Berlin, 1946, S. 46.

were influenced by the latter ideologically. At the close of the century there was thus no women's socialist movement in any country, even in countries with hundreds of thousands of women factory workers.

During the 1896 London congress of the Second International 30 socialist women delegates from Britain, Germany, the USA, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Poland held the first-ever conference, at which they considered the relations between the bourgeois feminist and proletarian women's movements. It was found that these movements had to be demarcated and that the socialist parties should step up their activities among women workers in order to draw them into the general proletarian struggle.

The proletarian women's movement in Russia was the first to embark on this road. Testimony of this is a resolution of the Amsterdam congress of the Second International (1904), stating: "The Russian women's movement, which awakened simultaneously with the general liberation movement in that country ... is, by and large, unquestionably shedding the bourgeois character typical of the women's movements in some other European countries."¹

THE YOUNG WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The mounting exploitation of the working class very painfully affected young people. Also, they acutely felt the effects of militarisation in the leading capitalist countries during the transition to imperialism with its growing demand for cannon fodder. Many young workers realised that unity was indispensable if they were to win economic and political rights. The major factors contributing to the formation of youth organisations were the universal striving of the proletariat for unity, the founding of socialist parties and trade unions, and the spread of socialist ideas among large segments of the working class.

Young workers, as an inalienable part of the proletariat, were affected by the political and ideological tendencies influencing the working class as a whole. Militancy was the keynote of the proletarian youth organisations, and this helped to mould fighters for socialism.²

The formation and activities of the socialist youth organisations were accompanied by unrelenting struggle against the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences spread by various anti-socialist youth leagues, including those of a clerical hue. The socialist youth movement was assailed also by the anarchist youth organisations in Sweden, Belgium, France, and Italy.

¹ V. Bilshai, *Solution of the Women's Question in the USSR*, Moscow, 1959, p. 67 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "The Youth International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 164.

The first association of young workers (named Young Guard) was founded in the autumn of 1886 in Ghent, *Belgium*, and branches soon sprang up in other towns. They were formally independent, but in their activities they affiliated themselves to the Socialist Party. Members were between 15 and 21 years of age; upon growing older most of them joined the Labour Party.

The association engaged mainly in anti-militarist campaigns, demanding the repeal of the system of lots and proxies in recruitment for the army¹ and a shorter term of military service. During the conscription in 1890 a Young Guard group conducted agitation at recruiting centres. A congress of the Labour Party, held in Louvain that same year, pledged support for the youth movement and instructed Party organisations to give it every possible assistance in its anti-war agitation. The congress gave the Young Guard two seats in the Party's National Council.

The government relentlessly harassed the Young Guard. In 1890 many of its leaders were arrested and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Militants of the youth movement were tried in subsequent years as well. However, the work of the association yielded results despite this persecution. According to a confidential poll conducted in 1899 by the War Minister, the Belgian officers were unanimous in the belief that their troops would not fight strikers.

Lenin subsequently wrote highly of the Belgian anti-war youth movement.²

In the *Netherlands*, Belgium's neighbour, the first youth organisations were likewise formed in 1886, but these came under the influence of anarchism. That was why at the Social-Democratic Party's congress in 1901 it was decided to form a new youth organisation. The commission set up by the congress drew up the rules for an association of young men and women workers, which began to function in December 1901. Its aims—it was called Sower—were to educate young people in a socialist spirit, show concern for their material and spiritual interests, and conduct anti-militarist agitation. However, in order to blunt the revolutionary militancy of young people, the party's reformist leadership reversed its stand on the question of the youth association's organisational principles. The Dutch socialist leaders instituted unflagging tutelage over the association and in fact deprived it of all independence.

This attitude to youth organisations was observed in some other

¹ Not all persons of conscription age were recruited. Lots were cast. Those who drew an "unlucky" lot could pay for a proxy. This was widely used by sons of well-to-do parents.

² V. I. Lenin, "Bellicose Militarism and the Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 197.

countries, reflecting the growth of opportunist influences in the leadership of the Social-Democratic parties.

In *France* the first socialist youth organisation was formed in 1894. As in Belgium, the movement of young workers spread in protest against militarisation. By 1899 some 200 local groups of young Socialists had been set up. They were active in educating young people politically and conducting anti-war propaganda. In January 1900 young French Socialists started a newspaper, which was circulated among young soldiers. Other anti-war publications also attracted a wide readership.

In *Austria* the first socialist youth association was founded in 1894. A conference of youth organisations, which proclaimed the formation of the League of Young Workers of Austria, was held only in 1904. In that country young people under 18 were banned from political activity, and could only act in defence of economic interests and engage in educational activity.

In *Bohemia* socialist youth organisations sprang up in 1896. These set themselves the aim of awakening the class consciousness of young workers, educating them in the spirit of scientific socialism, and delivering them from the spiritual and political influence of clericalism and nationalism. However, at its congress in Ceske Budejovice in 1900 the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party passed a resolution replacing the independent youth organisations with youth educational groups. The youth newspaper was placed under party control. "Czech Social-Democracy had created a wide-ranging, strongly organised and, in its small province, efficiently functioning network of youth organisations, but these were, in the main, denied what was most important to them—self-administration and direct participation in actual political life."¹

Initially, as in the Netherlands, the socialist youth organisations formed in *Sveden* in the 1890s were influenced by the anarchists. However, a congress of young Social-Democrats held in 1903 came out in favour of spreading socialist ideology and conducting anti-militarist agitation. It proclaimed its support for the demand for Norway's independence (it was then under Swedish rule) and urged young workers "to ignore mobilisation orders, if such are issued, and should they have to use arms, to desist from turning them against the Norwegian people".²

In *Germany* the first League of Young Workers was set up in Berlin in 1904. In the face of the Prussian police regime this organisation was active in giving young workers a socialist education and

¹ G. V. Chicherin, *From the History of the Youth International. Essays*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925, p. 23 (in Russian).

² W. Münzenberg, *Die sozialistischen Jugendorganisationen vor und während des Krieges*, Verlag Junge Garde, Berlin, 1919, S. 38.

protecting their socio-economic rights. That same year an analogous league was formed in Mannheim; its activities embraced the whole of southern Germany. In the easier atmosphere obtaining in that part of Germany it embarked upon vigorous anti-militarist agitation. True, this activity was not supported by the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, who in the very year the working youth organisations were founded, got the party's Bremen congress (1904) to reject a draft resolution calling for an intensification of anti-militarist agitation.

In characterising the first steps of the socialist youth movement G. V. Chicherin wrote: "A distinctive feature of the initial period ... of the young workers' movement, which began in the *mid-1880s*, is that this movement springs up first in different countries independently, often spontaneously, imperceptibly, and only gradually evolves into broader organisational forms and shows a striving first for unity on a national scale and then for international organisation."¹ This striving was particularly strong early in the twentieth century, when conferences of youth delegates were held during the Paris and then the Amsterdam congresses of the International. But in those years an international association of socialist youth was not formed chiefly because the process of the formation of national organisations of young workers had not ended. The Socialist Youth International was founded only in 1907.

While in West European countries obstruction by the reformists made it difficult for young people to take an active part in politics, in *Russia* the revolutionary Social-Democrats saw from the very beginning that young people had a definite role to play in the proletarian liberation movement and should be educated in the spirit of a consistent class struggle. This was the subject of one of the first leaflets issued by the Nizhny Novgorod Committee of the RSDLP at the end of 1902 and in early 1903 and addressed to the young people of Sormovo. Many of the fighters against tsarism and capitalist oppression in the 1890s were young workers. But in the conditions obtaining in Russia the formation of special young workers' organisations would have meant dissipation of strength; in the underground such organisations could not be large and would thereby have fallen short of one of the main purposes of their existence.

THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Workers and small-commodity producers in town and country, who had lost their economic stability, comprised the social base of the cooperative movement. The distinctions in the aims and forms

¹ G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., p. 12.

of the cooperatives depended precisely on the interests of the social categories represented by them.

The workers used producers', consumers', and housing cooperatives as a means of withstanding the onslaught of the capitalists and win an improvement of their living standard. As regards marketing, supply, credit, and loan-and-savings cooperatives, these were formed mainly by a segment of small proprietors and also by peasants, artisans, and craftsmen who counted on them to ensure their economic well-being within the framework of capitalism.

The founders of scientific communism gave a clear-cut assessment of the cooperative movement's significance to the proletariat. They noted that it constituted the "first breach" in the old forms of running the economy¹ but stressed that the movement as such would never refashion capitalist society. "To convert social production into one large and harmonious system of free and cooperative labour, *general social changes are wanted, changes of the general conditions of society*, never to be realised save by the transfer of the organised forces of society, viz., the state power, from capitalists and landlords to the producers themselves."²

Lenin regarded the cooperatives as an instrument for achieving some improvement of the working people's material condition, and noted that "the improvements secured by co-operative societies are confined within very narrow limits as long as the means of production and distribution remain in the hands of the class whose expropriation is the chief aim of socialism".³

The dimensions of the proletarian cooperative movement increased significantly in the 1880s. As it developed it became obvious that producers' co-operatives did not become widespread among the workers for they had not justified the hopes placed in them. These cooperatives could not compete with large-scale industry and had no chance of surviving. However, practice showed that it was unquestionably expedient to unite workers in consumers' cooperatives with the purpose of removing the numerous trade middlemen and acquiring goods on favourable terms. By the beginning of the twentieth century the consumers' cooperative became the basic unit of the proletarian cooperative movement.

In different countries the cooperative movement as such and its political orientation depended largely on the development level and character of the working-class movement. From this point of view

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 440.

² *The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866, Minutes*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 346.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Draft Resolution on Co-operative Societies from the Russian Social-Democratic Delegation at the Copenhagen Congress", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 265.

three orientations may be identified. The first, pursued by British and some French cooperatives, consisted of neutrality relative to political parties (these cooperatives proclaimed their autonomy in regard to such parties). The second was the orientation of the cooperatives in Germany, Austria, and Italy: these likewise proclaimed themselves autonomous, but unlike the first group they were unquestionably influenced by parties of the working class. Lastly, in Belgium and partly in the Netherlands and France the cooperatives were linked to Socialist parties in terms of organisation and programme, and constituted a major element of these parties.

Cooperatives were most widespread and enjoyed the greatest influence in *Britain*. At the close of the nineteenth century there were in Britain as many as 2,000 consumers' cooperatives with a total of over 1,600,000 members.¹ Leaders of the British cooperative movement repeatedly underscored their indifference to politics, and although they declared that they were concerned solely with economic matters, they in fact took their cue from the bourgeois parties. But the upswing of the working-class movement at the end of the nineteenth century affected the cooperatives as well. Consumers' societies began extending more assistance to the working-class movement. In 1893, for instance, they contributed nearly £35,000 for educational purposes. Considerable help was given to striking coal-miners.

In *Belgium* there were upwards of 1,800 various cooperatives at the beginning of the century. The Federation of Belgian Socialist Cooperatives was founded in 1900 as the coordinating centre. By that time the cooperatives had 86,000 members² and were a major component of the Labour Party. The Vooruit Consumers' Cooperative, formed in 1880 in the textile-manufacturing town of Ghent, was typical of this kind of cooperatives.

The Rules of the Belgian workers' cooperatives stated that their aims were, above all, political and socialist; it was mandatory for members to accept the programme of the Labour Party. The socialist cooperatives deducted one-third (more in times of sharp struggle) of their profit to the fund of the Labour Party. The People's Houses (Maisons du Peuple), built on cooperatives' money contained the offices of workers' unions and mutual-benefit funds; they had halls for party and workers' meetings, concerts, and theatrical performances, and premises for various circles, a library, printshop, newspaper editorial office, and so on. In Belgium the socialist cooperative movement made some advance in protecting the interests of the working people, but it was strongly influenced by reformism and tended to

¹ A.-D. Bancel, *Le Coopératisme*, Paris, Librairie C. Reinwald, Schleicher Frères, Editeurs, 1901, p. 133.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

rest content with "minor deeds", in other words it had the features that revolutionary Marxists had warned against.

In *France*, socialist-oriented workers' cooperatives sprang up in the 1890s in St. Claude. In Lille and Roubaix socialist cooperatives were set up by Belgian immigrant workers after the model of the Ghent Vooruit cooperative. Similar cooperatives were later formed in Paris and other towns.

Initially, all of them were affiliated to the Cooperative Union, founded by Charles Gide and other "pure cooperators", who insisted on the cooperative movement standing aloof from politics. However, in 1895 the socialist-oriented cooperatives withdrew from the Cooperative Union and founded the Cooperative Exchange of Socialist Consumers' Societies. This organisation grew rapidly: in 1894 it united 942 societies with 300,000 members, and in 1902 it had 1,600 affiliates with half a million members.¹ The socialist cooperatives used part of their revenues for social and political purposes. For instance, a cooperative formed in Paris' 3rd District in 1891 provided its members with free medical care, supplied them with medicines at reduced prices, and set up a loan fund; moreover, it created a solidarity fund and a propaganda fund.²

In *Germany* there also were two orientations in the cooperative movement. Societies affiliated to the General Union, headed by the petty-bourgeois economists Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch and H. Crüger, were the first to appear. They proclaimed political neutrality and asserted that all citizens, as consumers, had identical interests. Workers' consumers' cooperatives began to be formed in 1885 and these at first joined the General Union.

The proletarian cooperative movement began to develop more quickly after the Anti-Socialist Law against the Socialists was repealed. As dissociation from the General Union was going on, the proletarian Central Union of German Consumers' Societies was formed in 1903. It was joined by 666 cooperatives with a total of 573,000 members—this was many more than remained affiliated to the General Union.³ Most were workers' cooperatives. The Central Union established contact with the trade unions and, in some cases, acted in concert with them to improve the socio-political position of the working class. Many of the Central Union's leaders were Social-Democrats.

The attitude of the Social-Democratic Party to the cooperatives was clearly formulated in the relevant resolution passed at the Par-

¹ Georges Weill, *Histoire du mouvement social en France (1852-1902)*, Paris, Félix Alcan, Editeur, 1904, p. 377.

² *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, No. 83, 15.3.1902, p. 488.

³ Walter Hesselbach, *Die gewerkschaftlichen Unternehmen*, Europäische Verlagsanstalt Frankfurt, 1971, S. 66.

ty's Hannover congress in 1899. "The Party," this resolution stated, "considers the establishment of these societies can, in view of the propitious situation, improve the material condition of their members; it sees in these societies, as in any other organisation of the workers protecting their interests, a school in which workers can learn to manage their factories independently. But it refuses to see them as being of decisive significance for the liberation of workers from the chains of wage slavery".¹

In *Russia* workers' consumers' cooperatives, as mass organisations, appeared later than in Western Europe. This was due to the retarded formation of an industrial proletariat and the extremely unfavourable situation for forming any kind of workers' organisations. However, as early as the 1870s consumers' societies appeared in the industrial towns of the Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltic area. The Common Benefit Workers' Cooperative functioned at the Alexandrov engineering factory in St. Petersburg. The workers and office employees of the Neva Manufactory set up the Thrift Consumers' Society. Later, cooperatives were formed in Kharkov, Kiev, Rostov, and other towns. The Moscow Union of Consumers' Societies was founded in 1898.

The proletarian cooperative movement might have been an important part of the socialist working-class movement. But tolerance of reformism, which increasingly affected the parties of the Second International, inescapably made its mark on the development of the workers' cooperatives. Marxist views on the cooperatives were in many cases superseded by petty-bourgeois views, the significance of cooperatives was distorted and exaggerated, and the cooperatives themselves were regarded in the spirit of the untenable conceptions of so-called guild socialism, as a means of abolishing capitalism peacefully. As a result, the cooperative movement was in many instances turned into a reservoir of reformism and a bulwark of bourgeois influence on the working class and the toiling peasant masses.

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

During the closing years of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the class struggle witnessed a growth of the workers' self-awareness, which was mirrored, notably, by their increased gravitation towards knowledge and culture. This harmonised with the objective requirements of society's development. To operate new machinery and technologies in industry the workers had to have a better general education and professional training. This was

¹ Emile Vandervelde, *La coopération neutre et la coopération socialiste*, Paris, Librairie Félix Alcan, 1913, p. 102.

realised by many capitalists and, under their influence, by government officials. Alfred Marshall, a leading bourgeois economist of those years, wrote: "It will be profitable, as a mere investment, to give the masses of the people much greater opportunities (for education.—*Ed.*) than they can generally avail themselves of."¹

It was precisely the closing decades of the nineteenth century that saw the introduction of universal elementary education in a number of countries, for instance, Britain and Japan (1870s), France (1880s), and most of the states in the USA.

Advanced workers and their political organisations evaluated the introduction of universal elementary education as a significant democratic gain, but also saw the limitations and basic shortcomings of the school system. First, it did not provide for the abolition of illiteracy among adult working people and even among juveniles over the age of 12-13 (as a rule, compulsory education embraced only younger children). For example, in Austria the illiteracy rate in 1890 was nearly 35 per cent, while in some regions (Galicia, Bukovina) it was 80 per cent and even higher.²

Second, advanced workers and Social-Democrats realised that the ruling circles would strictly limit the people's access to culture and knowledge and that, in addition, whatever education was offered would be bourgeois in content. The workers' organisations therefore sought to replace this system with education in a socialist spirit, and to this end they formed their own cultural and educational institutions.

Two attitudes to determining the aims of workers' cultural and educational organisations emerged and later, in the opening years of the twentieth century, became pronounced in the working-class movement itself: Marxist, revolutionary, on the one hand, and social-reformist, on the other. The former saw the close link between cultural and educational work and the moulding of the workers' class consciousness, revolutionary agitation and propaganda and the struggle for the emancipation of the working class. The latter held that this work should be separated from politics.

Lenin exposed the methodological and political viciousness of the reformist theses that no revolutionary agitation and propaganda could be conducted among the workers before they raised their educational level. He emphatically rejected the view that there had to be a cultural revolution before the working class could assume leadership of society and embark upon deep-going social transformations. In enlarging upon Marx's proposition that the people themselves

¹ Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, MacMillan & Co., Limited, London, 1910, p. 216.

² M. N. Kuzmin, *The School and Education in Czechoslovakia (end of the 18th century-1930s)*, Moscow, 1971, p. 143 (in Russian).

change as they refashion the world around them, Lenin noted that the masses could not be enlightened in the true sense of the word without their involvement in the struggle for their liberation.

Some workers' cultural and educational organisations played a large role not only in raising the educational and cultural level of the workers but also in uniting them ideologically and organisationally, promoting their political activity, and setting up class organisations of the working people. In *Germany*, for example, while the Anti-Socialist Law was in operation the legally functioning workers' educational organisations were strongpoints of the Social-Democratic Party, especially during election campaigns. After this law was repealed, the Social-Democratic Party and the trade unions affiliated to it enlarged the network of cultural and educational organisations and institutions (clubs, associations, and so on).

In *Britain* the movement for an independent political organisation of the proletariat and working-class representation in parliament promoted the development of workers' clubs and other educational institutions. The British workers began removing bourgeois liberals from the management of clubs and, in the mid-1880s, also from the leadership of the Union of Workers' Clubs. Only clubs managed by representatives of the workers could be members of this Union. In the period from 1885 to 1891 the number of clubs nearly trebled. Their activities became more diversified, highlighting lectures on politics, economics, and the condition of the working class. A movement to give a socialist orientation to Sunday schools for workers and their children commenced in the 1890s. A higher type of workers' educational institution was set up in 1899. This was Raskin-Hall, later renamed Raskin-College, where political, economic, social, and historical problems were studied.

In *France* the educational work conducted by the Paris Commune gave a strong impetus to the people's struggle for the democratisation of education. In 1872 the French Enlightenment League, founded by Jean Macé, collected nearly 1,200,000 signatures to a petition demanding compulsory free secular education.¹ Laws on free secular elementary education were passed in the 1880s despite bitter opposition from the Church and all reactionary forces.

The labour exchanges, which were also clubs and cultural centres, developed into important educational centres in the 1880s-1890s. They had libraries and ran professional training and general education courses, helping workers to widen their mental outlook.

People's universities began to be set up at the close of the nineteenth century. Some were formed by trade unions. In many cases the

¹ Mona Ozouf, *L'école, l'Église et la République, 1871-1914*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1963, p. 31.

money to finance them came from the workers' consumers' co-operatives. Institutions of this type had other names, too. In Paris there was a circle for fraternal assistance and the study of social problems; in Nantes there was a People's Society for Social Economy. The people's universities offered lectures and arranged discussions on problems of natural science, philosophy, politics, and political economy, in which eminent French cultural personalities, for instance, Anatole France, took part.

At first the leadership of the people's universities consisted of representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie and the workers. Then a struggle erupted between the bourgeois-liberal and proletarian trends over the character and ideological orientation of these institutions. As a result, the bourgeoisie was removed from the administration of these universities.

In the USA the Order of the Knights of Labor made a large contribution to the enlightenment of workers. Many of its local assemblies set up libraries and reading-rooms on their premises and arranged lectures and discussions on topical issues. However, the Order's leadership regarded the education of the workers as self-sufficing and fundamental, giving it preference over political action.¹

In *Russia* the illegally functioning workers' and Social-Democratic organisations did much to raise the cultural level of the proletariat. For instance, the study circles formed in St. Petersburg by the D. N. Blagoev group concentrated on natural science and history. A group headed by P. V. Tochisky saw general education as a vital element in the moulding of a politically-conscious Social-Democrat. This group had a library stocked with officially approved and prohibited literature. The Social-Democratic organisation headed by M. I. Brusnev formed study circles of three levels, including the first-ever study circles for women workers. The programme of the first level embraced reading, writing, and elementary political knowledge; circles of the second level studied natural science, political economy, and the working-class movement; circles of the third level trained workers to be agitators. Extensive work of this nature was conducted in the 1890s by Marxist study circles in Georgia, Latvia, and Estonia.

Educational activity was part of the work of the Polish revolutionary working-class organisations. In the Russian empire's Polish lands this activity was conducted by, among others, Rosa Luxemburg, Julian Marchlewski, and Felix Dzerzhinski.

Lenin and his associates inaugurated a new stage in the cultural and educational work of working-class organisations. As early as

¹ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II, pp. 75-76.

the beginning of the 1890s some Marxists taught at evening Sunday schools; they included N. K. Krupskaya, who in 1891 joined the staff of teachers at the Smolenskiye classes in St. Petersburg, which were attended by about a thousand men and women workers. Krupskaya subsequently wrote that "acquaintanceship with the facts of natural history had a revolutionary effect on the pupils".¹ The Marxists who taught in the evening Sunday schools brought the workers round to pondering over political problems and drew them into Marxist study circles. Some of Krupskaya's pupils, one of whom was I. V. Babushkin, were members of study circles conducted by Lenin.

In March 1895 the Minister for the Interior Durnovo addressed a letter to the Chief Procurator of the Synod, expressing his suspicions of the lecturers at the Sunday schools and raising the question of "screening the persons admitted to these schools". In this connection Lenin wrote: "The minister regards the workers as gunpowder, and knowledge and education as a spark; the minister is convinced that if the spark falls into the gunpowder, the explosion will be directed first and foremost against the government. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of noting that in this rare instance we totally and unconditionally agree with the views of His Excellency."²

Lenin's League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class and, under its influence, the Social-Democratic organisations of some other towns began building up libraries of prohibited literature. The Social-Democratic organisations greatly reinforced the revolutionary orientation of cultural and educational activities, giving them a proletarian, revolutionary character.

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH ON THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

In order to counter the steadily spreading influence of socialism in the working-class movement the bourgeoisie made every possible use of the Church, which in this period was gradually becoming an ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie.

The Church's potentialities for influencing the working-class movement sprang from the fact that a segment of the workers were believers. The reasons for this profession of religion, Lenin noted, were, among other things, that the working masses were socially downtrodden and felt they were helpless against their exploiters. "Fear of

¹ N. K. Krupskaya, *Pedagogical Essays*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, p. 49 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "What Are Our Ministers Thinking About?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 90.

the blind force of capital. ...," he wrote, "such is *the root* of modern religion which the materialist must bear in mind first and foremost."¹

These objective prerequisites for the spread of religious illusions in the working-class movement facilitated the attempts of the leaders of the Christian churches to control a section of the proletariat, to turn them into obedient "pastors" of capital.

The Church evolved a system of views which it propagated among the workers as a counterbalance to socialist ideas. Of all the Christian churches, the most clear-cut social doctrine was propounded by the Catholic Church, whose ideological activities among the workers at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was based on the encyclical *Rerum novarum* of Pope Leo XIII, published in 1891. The significance of this encyclical is that it was the Catholic Church's first definitive document explaining its support for the capitalist system. The place held by this encyclical in the history of the Catholic Church can be judged by the fact that all its principal postulates remain in force in the present-day Catholic social doctrine, albeit somewhat modified, adjusted to the general crisis of the capitalist system.

A hallmark of Leo XIII's encyclical is its rabidly anti-socialist nature. The Socialists were portrayed as "adroit agitators who constantly use all arguments to distort human judgements and stir the people to rebellion". Their proposals for society's transformation were proclaimed as "unsuitable for implementation"; if they were implemented the workers would "be the first to suffer from them".

The commitment of the Catholic Church's leaders to fortify the pillars of capitalist society was seen most clearly in their striving to sanctify the principle of capitalist property in the means of production. The inviolability of private property was proclaimed the prime and basic principle that could help to "ease the condition of the masses".

Leo XIII believed that it was the Catholic Church's fundamental task to promote cooperation between exploiters and exploited. He declared that society's division into classes was inevitable, that it followed from Holy Writ. The Pope asserted that "capital does not exist without labour, and labour does not exist without capital"; from this he drew the conclusion that there had to be "harmony" between labour and capital. In the encyclical he denied that capitalism was a society with antagonistic classes and declared that the view that "the rich and the poor are destined to live in a state of constant warfare with each other" was a "great delusion".

The encyclical enjoined on the workers "never to resort to violence in defence of their cause and to provoke no unrest and disorder".

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 406.

Should there be "workers' strikes and stoppages", threatening social tranquillity, the state would be justified in taking steps to prevent the "danger of sedition".

The keynote of the papal message was that the Church had an exceptional role to play in the settlement of the social problem. This settlement "can by no means be found without the assistance of religion and the Church," the encyclical said.

Alongside the official Catholic social doctrine, there were other confessional ideological schools. The most notable of these was *Christian socialism* or *social Christianity*, as this school became known at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Its spokesmen urged more or less radical social reforms and were emphatically opposed to any form of revolution. Social Christianity won the support of the leaders of the Catholic Church. However, the higher clergy sometimes criticised some of its spokesmen, feeling that they were going too far in trying to win over the workers with slogans that could boomerang against the bourgeoisie.¹

In the early years of the twentieth century there were groups of theoreticians of social Christianity in many large West European countries. These preached supra-class "social justice", advocated the "establishment of the means of concord and alliance between classes by law",² and, as they themselves admitted, sought to prevent the working class from being won entirely by militant socialism. In opposition to socialism founded on what they asserted were "egoistical class aspirations" they advocated "true socialism" based on the Old Testament, the Gospel, and the writings of the Church fathers. Noting that "abuse of terms is a most common practice in politics", Lenin wrote that "friends of Pope Leo XIII" had likewise often styled themselves Socialists.³

In Russia, too, Christian socialism emerged in the 1890s. With the working-class movement rapidly gathering momentum, the Orthodox clergy and the intellectuals close to them sought to find in Christian ideology the means of countering the ideas of scientific socialism.

¹ Modern apologists of social Christianity claim that at the beginning of the century its spokesmen played a conspicuous role in elaborating the slogans and practice of "collaboration in administration", that was so topical in the 1960s-1970s, and hold that the idea of the proletariat's integration in capitalist society has its roots in the theories propounded by Christian Socialists (for example, R. Weiler "Katholische Soziallehre unterwegs", *Festschrift Franz Loidl*, 2. Halbb., Wien, 1970, S. 354; Johannes Messner, *Die soziale Frage*, Tyrolia-Verlag, Innsbruck, Wien, München, 1956, S. 323-25).

² G. Candeloro, *Il movimento cattolico in Italia*, Roma, 1974, p. 295.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 127.

However, Christian socialism made no significant headway in Russia. This was due mainly to the revolutionary militancy of the Russian proletariat. Also, a contributing factor was that as a component part of the state apparatus the Orthodox Church could not, even for demagogical purposes, deviate from the course followed by the autocracy. This stand of the Russian Orthodox Church compelled it to officially denounce Christian socialism as a heresy alien to the spirit of Christianity.

The postulates of the papal encyclical *Rerum novarum* and the ideas of social Christianity determined the content and character of the *confessional trade unions*. The Pope made no secret of the fact that he regarded them as an instrument by which the Church could influence the working-class movement. Complete subordination to the clergy was required of the Christian trade unions, with religion proclaimed as their unshakable foundation.

The postulates of the encyclical were mirrored in the Rules of the Christian trade unions (the only distinctions being that in some instances the Rules were an exact copy of the encyclical, and in others they were confined to references to it). This explains the strictly confessional character of these trade unions. The Church had official representatives in the leading bodies of most of the national Christian trade unions and controlled their activities. Profession of the Catholic faith was an indispensable condition for membership of the Distributive and Industrial Workers' Union, one of the French Christian trade unions.

In many cases employers and workers were members of one and the same union. This was to be observed in Spain, Italy, and France. But in other countries (Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands) Christian unions consisted, on the insistence of the rank and file, exclusively of working people. With the passage of time the movement for a homogeneous membership of the Christian trade unions spread to all leading capitalist countries. Here the determining role was played by the experience of the mass struggle, of participation in the strike movement. "We do not reject the form of a mixed union and we readily concede that in theory it is the most perfect form," G. Rutten, head of the Christian trade unions in Belgium, said in 1904. "But this is no motivation for closing our eyes to what is obvious and stubbornly refuse to admit that at present a mixed union is an unrealisable utopia."¹

Rigid orientation on the Church's social doctrine exerted a decisive influence on the confessional trade-union movement. Everywhere it was characterised by moderate aims, chiefly of a religious-moral character and rejected the principles of the class struggle. This is clear-

¹ Laurent Dechesne, *Syndicats ouvriers belges*, Paris, 1906, p. 76.

ly brought out even by a cursory reading of the Rules of that period. For instance, the programme of the Association of Christian Trade Unions of Austria contained the following eloquent provision: "Employers and workers are indispensable factors of the production process. They have many interests in common. Consequently, the Christian unions reject the class struggle in both theory and practice."¹ There were words to the same effect in a resolution passed by the congress of the German Christian trade unions in 1899. It declared that all the work of the unions should be permeated with a spirit of conciliation. Demands had to be moderate. Strikes were only permitted as a last resort and only in the event there was a promise of success. An analogous picture was to be observed in other countries.

The intensification of the strike struggle at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century brought some changes. This was seen chiefly in that programme demands of a socio-economic character began to be given increasing prominence.

The religious-moral aims central to the propaganda of the clerical unions somewhat lost their significance, being overshadowed by class interests and demands. Sometimes clerical unions were quite active in strikes. For instance, a Christian miners' union joined in a miners' strike in the Ruhr, Germany, in early 1905, while one of its leaders was elected to the central strike committee.² Spanish Catholic miners' and railwaymen's unions acted similarly.

However, this did not bring the Christian trade-union movement into the class struggle. They continued their practice of championing the socio-economic demands of the working people mainly by concluding compromise bargains with employers. Their participation in strikes was episodic and rather an exception than the rule.

The corporate ideology of the clerical trade unions, the moderation of their demands, and their purely conciliatory tactics bred the distrust of large masses of working people. The social base of the confessional trade-union movement was confined to artisans, workers of small factories, and office employees, while most of the factory proletariat gravitated towards unions linked to Marxist parties.

Other Christian workers' organisations also appeared as a response to the growth of the working people's class consciousness. These were mostly mutual-aid societies that ran vocational schools, hospitals, summer camps, cheap canteens and hostels, and provided small allowances and medical care. Some operated savings banks, consum-

¹ *150 ans de mouvement ouvrier chrétien en Europe de l'Ouest, 1789-1939*, Paris-Louvain, 1966, p. 118.

² H. van der Meer, *Politischer Klerikalismus contra Gewerkschaftseinheit*, Berlin, 1964, S. 18. The changes we have noted in the stand of the Christian trade-union movement in Germany led to a growth of its membership. In 1904 the General Association of Christian Trade Unions had 105,556 members.

ers' cooperatives, labour exchanges, and Sunday general education schools and vocational courses, and organised musical circles, theatrical productions, and sports contests. The largest number of Catholic workers' organisations were in Germany, Belgium, Austria, and Spain in that order.

The Church gave every encouragement to guardianship organisations. Their worker-members were exhorted to "obey their employers as they would God". The clerical ideologists told that a crust of bread, a cup of milk, some coal or an old shirt and a heap of "good Christian advice" could make it easier to reach the heart of the worker, reconcile him to exploitation and oppression and, more importantly, prevent him from joining in the class struggle and the revolution.

These were the aims, in particular, of the international Catholic Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, which had branches in many countries. Also of this type was the religious-philanthropical Salvation Army, which gave its attention mainly to unemployed, declassed poor, and vagrants. An international congress of "workers' truck gardens" movement was held in Paris in 1903; the aim of this movement was to raise the living standard of proletarians by having them cultivate plots of land instead of engaging in a class struggle. In European countries and in the USA Catholic figures set up various foundations such as family-aid and interest-free loan funds.

The confessionalism, moralistic orientation, and paternalistic aims of the Christian organisations were alien to the working class; hence the small membership and chiefly local character, of these organisations.

In some countries there were Catholic people's secretariats, which claimed to act as labour exchanges. They registered the labour demand and supply, engaged in "friendly arbitration" in conflicts at factories, helped people learn trades, provided legal advice, and so on. When there were strikes these secretariats intervened with conciliatory and paternalistic advice.

Christian organisations were also active among various categories of working women. Acting in accordance with the tenets of the Church they sought to exercise a moral influence on women workers, to persuade them that their principal interests were to bring up children in a religious spirit. Championing the reactionary slogan of "children—the kitchen—the Church", the Church endeavoured to prevent women from participating in socio-political life, in the class struggle.

The Protestant Church acted similarly, but with less vigour. The Protestant workers' organisations usually competed with their Catholic counterparts.

Among the workers Protestant organisations were the most wide-

spread in Germany. In other countries they were small and uninfluential during these years. For instance, the Christian Social Union, which by 1903 had affiliated societies in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA, numbered only 4,000 members.¹

There were few inter-confessional organisations because the leaders of both the Catholic and the Protestant churches were quite content to see the working people divided and, consequently, dissociated by religion. An inter-confessional organisation of textile workers called Unity was set up in the Netherlands in 1895 (with a Catholic and a Protestant section). This was a shortlived venture, disbanded by Church authorities.

In Russia there was a Society for the Dissemination of Religious and Moral Enlightenment in the Spirit of the Orthodox Church but it drew little support from the industrial proletariat. The St. Petersburg Association of Russian Factory Workers, headed by a prison priest (G. Gapon), was formed early in the twentieth century. By 1905 it had 11 branches in St. Petersburg with 10,000 members.²

The Church gave much of its attention to young people. At the close of the nineteenth century there were so-called Kolping families—mutual-aid organisations named after their founder, the German priest Adolf Kolping—throughout Central Europe and the USA. In these organisations young artisans and apprentices received a religious education and vocational training; they were headed by priests, who prohibited all political discussion. In Germany, for instance, these organisations had a total of 178,000 members in 1904.

In France the largest and most active of these organisations was the Catholic Association of French Youth, which had 150,000 members in 1905.³ However, despite the efforts of its leaders, it failed to win any perceptible influence among the working class.

The Christian Youth Union, whose membership consisted of Protestants and Catholics, had affiliates in many European and Asian countries and in America in the early years of the twentieth century. In the USA this organisation had not only town and rural branches but also clubs with reading-rooms, libraries, evening general education and church schools, and lecture halls, all of which were run on voluntary donations and also on deductions from the profits of firms. The stated aim of these clubs was to protect young people from harmful influences.

¹ Arthur V. Woodworth, *Christian Socialism in England*, London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1903, p. 145.

² *The Church in Russia's History (9th century-1917)*, Moscow, 1967, p. 247 (in Russian).

³ Charles Molette, *L'association catholique de la jeunesse française, 1886-1907*, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1968, p. 18.

However, the Church was unable to organise a mass movement in opposition to the impact of socialist ideas among the working class. These were unquestionably predominant ideas among proletarians, while the workers' political parties and trade unions continued to win growing popularity and prestige. "The Christian workers' movement did not become massive,"¹ writes the Austrian Catholic spokesman Gerhard Silberbauer. Moreover, the Church failed to turn confessional trade unions and other Christian workers' organisations into entirely obedient instruments of its policies. The contradictions that emerged in these organisations at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century continued to intensify during the next decades, which witnessed decisive revolutionary changes.

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE REVOLUTIONARY AND THE OPPORTUNIST TRENDS GROWS INCREASINGLY ACUTE

As the period of capitalism's relatively peaceful development drew to a close and the conditions for the triumph of the proletarian revolution matured, the Second International was faced with new tasks and became increasingly important for the workers' struggle for liberation. "The proletariat," Lenin wrote, "cannot pursue its struggle for socialism and defend its everyday economic interests without the closest and fullest alliance of the workers of all nations...."² Naturally, the International's responsibility for the outcome of the great battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat grew immeasurably when the order of the day called for readying the advanced contingents of the international proletariat for the socialist revolution.

A steep numerical growth of the proletariat, which became a major, active social force in more and more countries, and the expanded scale of the working-class movement also called for strengthening international links and coordination of actions by workers of different countries. Mutual support was likewise necessary for concerted resistance to the anti-democratic designs of the monopolies, which sought to unite the forces of world reaction, to the big bourgeoisie's aggressiveness, which had grown more pronounced with the commencement of the epoch of imperialism (during the closing years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century it had unleashed the first imperialist wars). Steps had to be taken to counter the

¹ Gerhard Silberbauer, *Osterreichs Katholiken und die Arbeiterfrage*, Verlag Styria, Graz, Wien, Köln, 1966, S. 157.

² V. I. Lenin, "Theses on the National Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 245.

aspiration of the ruling classes to stamp out the ideas of class struggle in the minds of the working people, replace them with reformist views, disunite the masses, and subordinate them by sowing nationalism and chauvinism.

The revolutionary Social-Democrats did their utmost to strengthen the international unity of the working-class movement on a Marxist foundation. But it was only Lenin and his associates who clearly saw the decisive significance of cooperation and unity among the international proletariat in the new historical situation.

The Second International's guideline, which had been drawn up by Engels, was that its congresses, convened once in several years should be aimed among other things, at gradually raising the ideological and political level of all workers' organisations. Lenin, who continued Engels' work, concentrated on ensuring the further consolidation of international unity and thereby enabling the International as a whole and its individual contingents to meet the new historical requirements. He took note of and supported every step in that direction, levelling principled criticism at any deviation from proletarian internationalism.

Early in the twentieth century, thanks to the persevering efforts of revolutionary Socialists the Second International branched out into a ramified system of international organisations and links. In the world working-class movement much began to depend on how all the links of that system were developing.

Socialist congresses remained the system's main component part (from the first years of the twentieth century onwards they were convened usually once in three years). These congresses considered the most significant, vital problems of the international working-class movement and, in their resolutions, drew upon the extensive experience of the class struggle of the proletariat in different countries. The drafting of the resolutions involved a sharp struggle against the opportunists, who in the early twentieth century were not yet predominant in the International but were already influencing its work.

Representation of workers' organisations at congresses was extended and became better regulated. Representatives could be sent not only by workers' parties but also by trade unions and other associations, who decided independently whether to elect or appoint delegates. The number of participating countries grew steadily. The Paris congress, held in 1900, was attended by envoys from 22 countries, while the 1904 Amsterdam congress drew delegates of the working people from 25 countries, including three American and two Asian countries, and also Australia.

Leading personalities of the International sought to unite all workers' and socialist organisations with the exception of obviously

anarchist ones (which took a categorical stand against political struggle); that explains why the pseudo-socialist Fabian Society and, later, the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which was in fact not proletarian, were admitted to membership of the International. As a result, 45 organisations of 25 countries were represented at the 1904 Amsterdam congress.

As a rule, the delegates from each country were regarded as representing an integral national section (which was, in fact, not the case in many instances), and at the congresses of 1900 and 1904 each delegation had two votes. "Where two different schools exist in the socialist movement of one country, each of these schools, "Kautsky declared, "should have a vote."¹ More often than not this benefited the opportunists, who thereby enjoyed equal rights with the Marxists.

In the 1890s preparation for congresses was conducted by organising committees set up by the workers' parties that had been given the relevant assignment at previous congresses; after 1900 this function was performed by the International Socialist Bureau, which was set up by a decision passed unanimously at the Paris congress.

Lenin attached great importance to the revolutionary working-class movement of Russia having an adequate, i.e., the fullest possible, representation at congresses of the International. In the early twentieth century this was particularly difficult because of the profusion of non-Marxist organisations (the Bund, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and others) that usually had the majority representation in the Russian delegation. On the eve of the 1900 Paris congress, which was to consider the "Millerand case", Lenin made every effort to reinforce the delegation with Russian Marxists. At the time they could only be represented by the Emancipation of Labour group, and thanks to Lenin they received four mandates from local Social-Democratic organisations in Russia. One of these mandates, sent by the Social-Democrats of Ufa, stated: "We ... recognise the members of the Emancipation of Labour as the true spokesmen of our views and commission to them our votes at the coming international socialist congress."² At discussions of cardinal issues Plekhanov and his supporters consistently sided with the left wing at the congress.

During this period nobody in the international working-class movement was openly opposed to international unity among the proletariat. However, in fact such unity was opposed by spokesmen of various opportunist schools. In order to undermine the influence of Marxism, which was predominant in the International, they dis-

¹ *Members of the International Socialist Bureau Versus Plekhanov*, Geneva, (year of publication not indicated), p. 6. (in Russian).

² *Lenin in the Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, pp. 38-39.

puted the competence of the organisation, rejected the need for strengthening it, and sought to prevent the Socialist parties from agreeing on a common political guideline. At the Paris congress of 1900 Vandervelde and his supporters questioned the International's powers to discuss problems of the working-class movement of individual countries, in that particular case—France.¹ At the Amsterdam congress in 1904 Jaurès and the delegates supporting him spoke against the International laying down "international rules of socialist tactics". They held that the International should in no way bind or regulate the activities of workers' parties, declared Marxist principles as "German" and unacceptable to Socialists of other countries, and contended that the minority had the right to refuse to submit to the majority.²

On the colonial issue, the question of trade unions, and other problems the revisionists tried to impose on the international working-class movement their own policy that came into conflict with proletarian internationalism. They gradually extended their positions in the International.

As in the 1890s, the German Social-Democrats continued to occupy a leading position in the International. But the growing influence of the opportunists in the German working-class movement foreshadowed a weakening of the prestige once enjoyed by the SDPG delegation. To some extent this was also true of the representatives of the French Socialists, although the Socialist Party of France was still playing an important positive role at congresses of the International. However, increasing influence was gradually won by delegates of organisations that took a stand against opportunism and perseveringly sought a Marxist solution of problems vital to the working-class movement. The Bolsheviks, representatives of the first revolutionary party of a new type,³ became the vanguard of the revolutionary forces at the International's congresses.

Before the 1904 Amsterdam congress was held, Lenin and his supporters had a bitter fight on their hands to win recognition of their right to participate in the congress: the Mensheviks, who had seized control of the Party's central bodies, were determined to remove the Bolsheviks, but ultimately found they could do nothing. A task of paramount importance was to inform the international Social-Democratic movement of the real state of affairs in the RSDLP and of the circumstances that led to a split. To this end a report headed "Materials Explaining the Crisis in the RSDLP" was written un-

¹ *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Paris. 23. bis 27. September 1900*, Berlin, 1900, Verlag: Expedition der Buchhandlung Vorwärts, S. 18.

² *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Amsterdam. 14. bis 20. August 1904*, Berlin, 1904, Verlag: Expedition der Buchhandlung Vorwärts, S. 58-62.

³ See Chapter 10.

der Lenin's direction. It was distributed among all the delegates to the congress by the Bolsheviks M. N. Lyadov and P. A. Krasikov, who went to Amsterdam and managed to get themselves included in the Russian delegation. This document characterised the consistently Marxist stand of the majority in the RSDLP and the basic principles underlying the new type of party, and was the first official act of the Bolsheviks on the international scene. At the congress, contrary to Plekhanov's urgings that they follow the SDPG in everything, Lyadov and Krasikov pursued an independent ideological and political line charted by Lenin.

At international socialist congresses in the early years of the twentieth century there were few *revolutionary Social-Democrats*, but they were conspicuous for their uncompromising stand against revisionism and their striving to develop Marxism creatively. As well as by the RSDLP delegates, this stand was taken by delegates of the Serbian workers, and some representatives of the Social-Democrats of Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, and a number of other countries. They lacked unity, but they were distinguished by their commitment and fidelity to Marxism, by their reliance on the revolutionary trend in the working-class movement, on the revolutionary feeling of the proletarian masses. In some cases they won the support of many delegates. For that reason, although they were a minority, the revolutionary Social-Democrats were able to cut short the attempts of the revisionists to proclaim social-reformism as the foundation of the International and succeeded in achieving a correct solution of some major problems of the international working-class movement. The revolutionary Social-Democrats, the Bolsheviks in the first place, pressed for the consistent implementation of the Marxist resolutions of international congresses. This was becoming increasingly difficult to do on account of opposition from avowed revisionists and of the conciliatory attitude towards them by many leaders of the International.

The *revisionists* called attention to themselves on the international scene for the first time at the Paris congress of 1900. Their line of action was supported by most of the Austrian, Belgian, Danish, Swedish, Swiss, and Dutch delegates, segments of the delegations from France, Germany, and Britain, and also some representatives from the USA, Italy, and Poland. More delegates took a revisionist stand in Amsterdam. But they suffered a series of setbacks and had to postpone a decisive clash with the revolutionary Social-Democrats and, with some exceptions, abandon their attempts to foist their views on the congress. The revisionists made every effort to strengthen their position in workers' organisations.

The *anarcho-syndicalist trend* did not play any noteworthy role at international socialist congresses. In Paris in 1900 anarcho-syndicalist

views were held only by some of the French delegates and individual representatives of Italian and Argentine workers' organisations; at the 1904 congress there were even fewer anarcho-syndicalists and these were unable to enlist any support.

Congresses of the Second International attracted the attention of the workers of all countries and received messages of greetings from many workers' organisations that wanted unity and supported the International's Marxist principles. While congresses were in session there were massive international rallies and demonstrations.

The bourgeoisie could not ignore the significance of the International's resolutions and the impact of these resolutions on the class struggle. Its spokesmen pinned their hopes on differences in the International and were vocal in lauding the pronouncements of the social-reformists.

The Second International's congresses in the early years of the twentieth century concentrated on a number of key problems. In the new historical situation the international working-class movement had to work out a *common political line* in the struggle for power, a line that would, needless to say, give the various parties sufficient freedom of action in the conditions prevailing in their own countries and with due account of their peculiarities. This was the central question at the 1900 Paris congress. The debates were particularly sharp on account of the "Millerand case", which occurred shortly before the congress was convened. Millerand's act of treachery held the attention of delegates and a debate flared up over the question of individual Socialists participating in bourgeois governments. Naturally, the problem of winning power was not reduced to this narrow issue, but its significance was nonetheless fundamental.

Jaurès declared that what was done by Millerand, who in fact became an instrument of reaction, was a model of "new tactics", "the commencement of the political expropriation of the bourgeoisie".¹ He called upon representatives of big workers' parties to participate in bourgeois governments and transform the Social-Democrats into a "new, resolute democratic liberal party".² He was supported by Ansel (Belgium), Auer (Germany), and others who approved of Millerand's action.

The revolutionary Social-Democrats were emphatic in their denunciation of Millerand. Guesde noted that his act was disorganising the proletariat and eroding the workers' class consciousness. He demanded condemnation of ministerialism. He did not reject the possibility of Socialists accepting portfolios in bourgeois governments, but considered that this was permissible not as a favour from

¹ *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Paris, 23. bis 27. September 1900*, S. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

the bourgeoisie but as a result of success at elections; yet even in the latter case Socialists' participation in a government would not amount to any "winning of power". He stressed that there had to be a dictatorship of the proletariat and proposed a draft resolution on the forcible winning of political power by the proletariat; Millerand's action was condemned as conflicting with the principles of the class struggle and socialism. The value of this basically Marxist document was diminished by the fact that, on a motion by Ferri (Italy), it unconditionally disapproved of Socialists entering any bourgeois governments regardless of the situation prevailing at any given time.

Many leaders of the International were worried by the sharpness of the debate, which was threatening the movement's unity, and sought to reconcile the sides. To this end they refused to condemn ministerialism or revisionism as a whole. Kautsky moved a draft resolution that spoke only of a peaceful assumption of power by the proletariat; the participation of individual Socialists in bourgeois governments was proclaimed solely as a question of tactics and was made conditional on the given party's consent and supervision. Neither the character of the bourgeois government, nor the purpose for which a Socialist took a post in it, nor the proletariat's attitude to a step of this kind, nor the overall political situation was taken into account. Nothing at all was said of Millerand's apostasy.¹

The Kautsky draft resolution was criticised by the revolutionary Social-Democrats on the grounds that it was conciliatory. Guesde declared that "because of the contradictions in it the Kautsky resolution will greatly prejudice the proletarian movement".² Vaillant, who supported Guesde, said that the "Kautsky resolution was capitulation" to the revisionists.³ Ferri called it a "rubber" resolution.⁴ But they failed to get a majority backing. Ansel, Auer, and the other revisionists, and also Jaurès and Vandervelde gave their votes to Kautsky. The resolution was passed. The conciliators thereby in fact prevented a Marxist settlement of the question of the proletariat's tactics in the struggle for political power, making substantial concessions to the revisionists on this cardinal issue.

The influence of the revisionists was also felt in the debate on the question of the prerequisites for the "realisation of socialism". The commission that drew up the relevant draft resolution refused to criticise Bernstein's views. Like him, some of its members argued

¹ *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Paris. 23. bis 27. September 1900*, S.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Lenin spoke bitingly of this document, characterising it as a "half-hearted, evasive resolution, conciliatory towards the opportunists" ("The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 477).

that the transition to socialism could be accomplished through the creation and development of producers' cooperatives. Wilhelm Ellenbogen (of Austria), who delivered the report, tried to link the Marxist teaching on the inevitability of capitalism's demise with a thesis that a proletarian revolution was not necessary. He stated that the collapse of bourgeois rule would not be the result of "sudden developments", the outcome of an uncompromising struggle, but of gradual "organic development". In this process the tasks of the Social-Democrats were reduced to educating and organising the proletariat.

The draft resolution declared that the Social-Democratic movement should prepare the proletarian forces for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of public property in the means of production. But there were much too many generalities, with not a word about the maturing of the objective prerequisites for socialism, the mobilisation of all the forces of the proletariat and its allies, the utilisation of national crises for the overthrow of bourgeois domination and, most important, about the character of the political power. The congress passed this resolution over the protests of Lafargue, who criticised revisionism and pointed out the weak points of the draft; the revolutionary Social-Democrats did not offer any alternative to the commission's proposal.

Nor did the 1900 congress prove equal to the new tasks in the approach to the problem of the *general strike*. The anarcho-syndicalists suggested that the international economic general strike should be the main "revolutionary form of action". Although the Marxists rejected this suggestion as adventurist and unrealisable they proposed no alternative.

In this and other questions some progress was made at the Amsterdam congress (1904). The sharpest debate was over the international rules of socialist tactics, the need and possibility for which were categorically denied by the revisionists. But this time they laboured in vain, their frustration being due to the upsurge of the working-class movement and the ignominious failure of the Millerand "experiment", which, as might have been expected, brought nothing to the French proletariat.

An extremely active role was played by the revolutionary Social-Democrats in the commission that drafted the resolution. On behalf of the Socialist Party of France Guesde submitted a draft resolution based on the resolution of the Dresden congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany directed against revisionism. This, it was felt, would ensure the SDPG delegation's support for the draft condemning "the efforts of the revisionists to modify our tried and victorious class struggle policy", to turn the Social-Democratic parties from revolu-

tionary into reformist organisations. It spoke of the aggravation of class contradictions and underscored that the proletariat had to win political power. The workers' parties, the draft stated, should not countenance "any measure tending to maintain in power the dominant class". They were urged to explain the ultimate aims of Social-Democracy to the masses and "defend most resolutely the interests of the working class" against militarism, colonialism, and all forms of exploitation. This was also the duty of the Social-Democratic parliamentary factions.¹

Most of the commission members voted in favour of the draft, but it was virulently attacked by the opportunists, backed by the avowed conciliators. Adler and Vandervelde proposed "amending" the SPF draft by deleting the condemnation of revisionism and even the term itself and re-endorsing the 1900 "rubber" resolution.²

Guesde, Bebel, Luxemburg, and many others denounced the importunities of the opportunists and pledged their support for the SPF draft. They rejected the revisionists' basic tenet—class collaboration—condemned ministerialism, and sharply criticised the "rubber" resolution and the striving for unity at the price of renouncing the principles of Marxism. Some of the revolutionary Social-Democrats stressed the need for dissociating from the revisionists.³ The Adler-Vandervelde amendments were rejected; by an overwhelming majority the congress passed the resolution submitted by the Socialist Party of France.

This was an unquestionable victory for the Social-Democrats. Revisionism got a rebuff and the congress reaffirmed the Marxist principles of Social-Democratic policy. But even this resolution did not state the new tasks of the Social-Democrats and did not say how power was to be won.

On the question of the mass strike the stand of the revolutionary forces was more mature than in 1900. The SPF submitted a draft assessing this strike as an important means of political struggle and of awakening the class consciousness of the workers, point-

¹ *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Amsterdam, 1904*, S. 31-32.

² William Z. Foster, *History of the Three Internationals*, International Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 179.

³ It is indicative that Plekhanov, who became a Menshevik, did not raise the question of dissociation. Although he spoke in support of the Guesde draft in the congress commission, he said: "I am asking my friend Adler how, with what microscope, did he manage to find anything in the draft... about condemning, oh, the word is terrible: stigmatising anybody.... This resolution contained nothing of the sort.... It is a question not of indicting individuals but of telling the international proletariat that there is a danger here" (*Philosophical and Literary Legacy of G. V. Plekhanov*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1973, pp. 35-36 [in Russian]).

ing to the connection between economic and political struggle and stressing that it was important for workers' parties to support strikes. A mass strike guided by Social-Democrats was regarded as a possible beginning and a stimulus of the revolution. However, this draft was not multiplied in time and many delegates knew nothing about it.

Another draft on this question was submitted by Henriette Roland-Holst, a delegate of the left wing of the Dutch Social-Democratic Party. In this draft, which coincided with that of the SPF on many points, the mass political strike was recommended as a strong weapon in defending and extending the rights of the working class and depending on circumstances, as a "last resort" means of revolution; further, it was emphasised that it differed basically from the general economic strike propounded by the anarcho-syndicalists, who argued that, without fusion with other effective means of struggle, it could put an end to the capitalist system. However, the Roland-Holst draft did not say that the mass strike should be directed by the Social-Democrats.

The anarcho-syndicalists again attempted to push through the resolution they had submitted at the Paris congress. The revisionists rejected the mass strike altogether. The congress passed the Roland-Holst draft. Thus, at a time when a powerful upsurge of the international working-class movement was commencing the Amsterdam congress, thanks to the efforts of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, resolved the question of the mass political strike in largely a Marxist spirit and recommended that the working class use this new means of struggle that had been tested shortly before in the class battles in Belgium, Russia, and Spain.

Attaching great significance to the working people's international May Day actions, which had by then become traditional, the international congresses of 1900 and 1904 reaffirmed the earlier resolutions on May Day. The 1900 Paris congress demanded the establishment of an eight-hour working day by legislation for all trades in all countries, and the promulgation of laws on a minimum wage and on special protection for female labour. Where the working day had been shortened to eight hours, the call was to press for its further reduction. The relevant resolution declared that there had to be concerted economic and political actions by workers' parties and by trade unions; but the resolution did not clearly link the struggle for an improvement of the workers' socio-economic condition with preparing the masses for a revolution, thereby leaving a loophole for an opportunist interpretation of the resolution. The Amsterdam congress recommended that May Day actions should be conducted under slogans calling for a struggle for proletarian class interests and for democratic aims, specifically for the

preservation of peace. This helped to make the May Day demonstrations more popular than ever.

The demand for an improvement of the working people's socioeconomic condition, notably the question of social insurance, was further enlarged upon at the Amsterdam congress. In this question the revisionists attempted to seize the initiative in the hope that the bourgeoisie would respond with some improvement of the workers' condition in order to avoid major social conflicts. The consistent Marxists insisted on the resolution accentuating the class content of the proletariat's struggle for social insurance. Following the debate, a majority voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Hermann Molkenbuhr (SDPG). Among other things, it urged the promulgation of laws on labour protection and on disability and unemployment insurance. It was demanded that the entire insurance system should be directed by workers' representatives. This was vital for developing the movement aimed at raising the living standard of the working masses. However, the resolution said that part of the insurance could come from the workers themselves, appealed to bourgeois philanthropy, and did not say anything about the connection between the economic struggle and the struggle against the existing order. This was used by the opportunists in their efforts to divert the struggle for social insurance into the channel of reformism.

The question of trusts was also discussed at both congresses. Without a debate the 1900 congress passed a resolution which unerringly characterised some results of the existence of trusts but could not suggest the ways and means by which the proletariat could effectively fight monopoly domination. It correctly noted that the creation of trusts meant greater exploitation and oppression for the workers and a rise in prices, but unfoundedly expressed the hope that the trusts could prevent overproduction and put an end to competition, and that the formation of international trusts would allow regulating world production. In this area the task of the working class was reduced mainly to demanding laws to compel the trusts to publish their fiscal accounts. It was envisaged that the trusts would ultimately pass to the state and this was assessed as a "transformation of capitalist into public production",¹ which could be interpreted in the spirit of reformist "state socialism". This resolution showed that even the revolutionary Social-Democrats were poorly informed about new phenomena and problems.

On a motion by representatives from the USA the question of trusts was brought up again at the Amsterdam congress. The reso-

¹ *Internationale Sozialisten-Kongress zu Paris, 1900*, S. 31.

lution on this question linked the struggle against monopolies with the struggle of the proletariat for political power, declaring that the Social-Democrats would be able to socialise production only after they won power. The growing threat from the monopolies should therefore be countered by the workers with organisation as the sole means of overthrowing capitalism. The adoption of this resolution was a triumph for the revolutionary trend.

At the Paris congress in 1900 a resolution stating that the movement for universal suffrage and direct legislation by the people was a condition for educating the masses, and a way of drawing them into the political struggle, and preparing them for winning political power was passed without a debate. The charted line was amplified in a resolution binding the Social-Democratic parties to agitate for suffrage for women and for the adoption of the corresponding laws.

An Interparliamentary Commission of Socialists was set up in 1900 to make proletarian representation in parliaments more effective. In addition, the Paris congress passed a resolution enjoining Social-Democrats to work in local self-government bodies and to use these bodies for extending the working people's democratic freedoms and improving their condition. It recommended that in each country there should be a national bureau of Social-Democratic deputies in local representative bodies; these should have permanent links with each other, exchange expertise, and convene an international conference. These recommendations were of practical value, but none of them defined the principles of revolutionary parliamentarism, which denounced opportunist practices in parliaments and making a fetish of parliamentarism.

At some of its congresses the International considered the colonial problem¹ and drew upon a programme of action against militarism, military provocations, and an imperialist world war that was being planned by the monopolies. In the debate on the question of peace, militarism, and standing armies at the Paris congress in 1900 Rosa Luxemburg declared that it was necessary to say "something new about the new developments in world politics".² After she had delivered her report, a resolution was passed unanimously in which it was noted that the threat of war had become permanent and that militarism had developed into a new form of world politics. It repeated the old demands—abolition of standing armies, institution of an international court, and the settlement of the question of war and peace by the peoples themselves—and exhorted the Socialists "to go over from more or less platonic dem-

¹ Chapter 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

onstrations of international solidarity to energetic international actions in politics, to a joint struggle against militarism in world politics".¹ It recommended an intensification of educational and organisational anti-militarist work among young people, vote-action in parliaments against expenditures on militarism and colonial expeditions and, when necessary, the organisation of international anti-war campaigns. This was a step forward.

The Amsterdam congress reinforced this resolution with an impressive protest against the Russo-Japanese war. With all the delegates and guests looking on, G. V. Plekhanov and Sen Katayama demonstratively shook hands, and the congress passed a resolution calling upon "Socialists and workers, who are the custodians of peace, to use all their resources in all countries to prevent an expansion of the war".²

In the early years of the twentieth century the work of the Second International was not confined to congresses. From 1900 onwards a substantial role was played in it by the *International Socialist Bureau*, one of whose main functions was to disseminate information with the purpose of promoting mutual exchanges of experience: the publication of documents of international congresses, reports of workers' organisations, and surveys of the development of the working-class movement, exchanges of views on important issues, the circulation of the recommendations of individual workers' parties, and so forth. The Bureau had organisational authority: in addition to convening congress, its terms of reference—from 1904—included the function of acting as the presidium of such congresses.

The Social-Democrats who sought to strengthen the International welcomed the formation of this Bureau in the hope that it would be an effective agency.

In keeping with a resolution passed by the 1900 congress, the Bureau consisted of representatives of all of the International's national sections. Each section was entitled to two votes. The sections funded the running of the Bureau.

During the first few years, because they underrated the new international agency or because of various difficulties, many sections did not send delegates to the Bureau's sittings. For instance, in the summer of 1903 its plenary meetings were attended by delegates from only 14 sections.³ The different parties were usually represented by the most distinguished personalities of the working-class movement, for instance, Bebel, Singer, Kautsky, Quelch,

¹ *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Paris, 1900*, S. 28.

² *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Amsterdam, 1904*, S. 10.

³ *A History of the Second International*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1966, p. 99 (in Russian).

Hyndman, Vaillant, Jaurès, Iglesias, Adler, and Rosa Luxemburg. The Russian Social-Democrats were at first represented by Plekhanov; from 1905 onwards the RSDLP was represented on the Bureau by Lenin.

There were a number of revisionists in the Bureau and their influence was seen in the agendas of the international socialist congresses convened by the Bureau. They endeavoured to limit the tasks of the congresses and strip their programmes of really important issues. For example, they prevented the Amsterdam congress from debating the programme on the nationalities question. Naturally, from the very outset the Marxists and the opportunists clashed at sittings of the Bureau.

At the 1900 Paris congress it was decided to form an Executive Committee and a Secretariat as permanent agencies of the Bureau. These were based in Brussels and consisted of prominent members of the Belgian Labour Party. Emile Vandervelde, who gravitated towards the revisionists but was able to manoeuvre and sense the mood of the majority, was chairman of the Executive Committee. His line was to refrain from antagonising the revolutionary Social-Democrats and win them over to the opportunists.

By agreement with the biggest parties, the Executive, which began functioning in 1901, issued statements and appeals on many international issues: in support of the revolutionary movement in individual countries, against the crimes of the reactionaries and colonisers, on May Day demonstrations, against militarism, and so on.

The first act of this kind was a statement welcoming the rapid spread of the revolutionary movement in Russia in the spring of 1901 and calling on the Socialists of all countries to declare their solidarity with the revolutionary workers of Russia and increase their assistance to them.¹ Support for the revolutionary movement in Russia became one of the major lines of actions by the Bureau and the International as a whole. On a motion from Roland-Holst the Amsterdam congress sent a message of greetings to the working class of Russia, stating: "The workers of the world see themselves in solidarity with its struggle against absolutism... by fighting for its own emancipation the proletariat of Russia is fighting for the emancipation of the world proletariat."²

The Bureau organised actions for peace among nations and protests against the arms race, colonial seizures, and wars of aggrandisement. In 1901-1902 the Bureau condemned the aggression of the imperialists of Britain in South Africa, of the USA in the

¹ *Bureau Socialiste International*, Vol. 1 (1900-1907), Paris, Mouton & Co., La Haye, 1969, pp. 27-29.

² *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Amsterdam, 1904*, S. 50.

Philippines, and of Japan in China, and appealed to the workers to study problems of international politics more closely and on a permanent basis. This was not enough, of course. The revolutionary Social-Democrats called for an active mass struggle against imperialist aggressors; the opportunists wanted action limited to protests.

On account of the Russo-Japanese war, the anti-war struggle in Russia acquired a mass character. Lenin saw it as objectively leading to a revolutionary crisis, weakening the "upper classes", and impelling the "lower classes" to fight with determination. He and his associates held that the defeat of the tsarist government would help to trigger revolution. In contrast to the bourgeois pacifists and the Mensheviks with their striving for peace "at all costs", the Bolsheviks pursued a course aimed at unfolding an anti-war movement and overthrowing tsarism. In 1904 alone the Bolsheviks printed nearly two million leaflets. Rallies and demonstrations were held despite police harassment; extensive work was conducted in the army, although this involved the danger of stern punishment. The Bolshevik-led anti-war actions of the workers fostered revolutionary feeling, the workers' sense of class awareness, and prepared the soil for revolution. The latter proved to be the most powerful factor compelling the tsar to halt the war.

At the outbreak of the war the working-class movement in Japan was much weaker than in Russia; the socialist organisations had not won a broad base. Moreover, chauvinistic propaganda and savage police terror prevented the development of an anti-war movement. Nevertheless, the Japanese Socialists managed to organise a series of rallies in Tokyo and other towns.

During the war the Bolsheviks of Russia and the Japanese Socialists set an example of proletarian internationalism. In May 1904, acting on behalf of the RSDLP Central Committee V. Bonch-Bruyevich requested the editors of the socialist newspaper *Heimt Shimibun* to help disseminate Bolshevik literature among Russian prisoners-of-war in Japan. In a month the newspaper's editor-in-chief informed Lenin that a large number of journals and leaflets had been distributed in a POW camp.¹

During the Russo-Japanese war the International Socialist Bureau was somewhat more active than in previous analogous situations. It condemned the war as a "crime by governments and capitalism" and called upon the proletariat to fight for its cessation "with all the power at its command".²

Thanks to the efforts of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, the Second International contributed palpably to the Marxist

¹ *Lenin in the Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, pp. 67-68.

² *Bureau Socialiste International*, Vol. 1, p. 104.

solution of some of the complicated problems facing the working class in the early 20th century. Despite the resistance of the revisionists, international congresses and the standing bodies of the International were still chiefly oriented on proletarian internationalism and on Marxist principles, though there was a trace of reconciliation with opportunism in some of their resolutions. Working for the unity of its sections, the International was concerned mostly with just that side of the matter, and neglected a still more important side—the ideological basis on which unity should be built. Here it proved incapable of living up to the new historical tasks, and shied from the only correct Leninist line of promoting revolutionary working-class parties of a new type. Still, in the early years of the 20th century the International continued to further the growth and consolidation of the working-class movement. That was why the revisionists of that time centred their activity on sabotaging or covertly and overtly ignoring resolutions drawn up in a Marxist spirit.

Chapter 9

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT IN COLONIAL AND DEPENDENT COUNTRIES. THE NATIONAL-COLONIAL ISSUE

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANISED PROLETARIAN MOVEMENT

Throughout the entire 1871-1904 period the level and scope of the working-class movement in colonial and dependent countries were quite varied. Despite all the existing differences, however, there was the common feature of their considerable lagging behind the working-class movement in the then most developed capitalist countries in the degree of organisation, involvement in class battles, level of class consciousness, and the assimilation of ways and means of countering exploitation and economic, social, and political oppression.

This lagging behind was the result of a gamut of factors, first and foremost of which was the low level of economic and social development. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Asian, African, and Latin American countries had been drawn into the orbit of the world capitalist economy, which was a result of the evolution of pre-monopoly capitalism into imperialism and the transition of the industrialised countries to the intensified export of capital to colonies and semi-colonies. Capitalist development was accelerated in all these countries. This took place, however, in rather unique conditions, which were different from those in Europe. Acting as a brake were colonial exploitation on the one hand and the constraining force of traditional forms of economy on the other.

Foreign domination, plus the stability of feudal economic and social institutions were responsible for great difficulties which confronted the emergent proletariat on its path to class self-determination, the creation of its own organisations, and the development of a successful struggle for its economic and political rights. The unification of the ranks of the proletariat was hampered by national and religious discord (and inter-caste strife in Asia), which was moreover fanned by the colonisers. The unbelievably high degree

of exploitation and miserly wages at the few capitalist factories, and the close ties between local industrial workers and the countryside resulted in the stability of their petty-bourgeois mentality as well as their traditional way of living and thinking. This was also furthered by the considerable predominance of workers employed in crafts and manufactories over the factory proletariat, and by the presence of a huge army of semi-proletarians—lumpens and paupers. The masses' age-long submissiveness to the powers that be and to the colonisers also made the awakening of the masses to an active political struggle extremely difficult.

However, there did exist factors which contributed to the gradual elimination of the above-mentioned impediments.

The maturing of the proletarian movement in colonial and dependent countries was accelerated under the influence of the class struggle of workers in the West, which had traversed a long path in its development by that time. The thousands upon thousands of so-called superfluous workers who had moved from mother countries to Asia, Africa, and Latin America were becoming direct catalysts of the revolutionising influence of the West. This furthered the development of contemporary forms of the organised workers' movement in dependent countries, particularly on the Latin American continent.

Another important factor was the national liberation movement, which gave rise to the struggle of the proletariat of Asia, Africa and Latin America which was emerging but still did not conceive of itself as a class.

The national liberation movement drew the proletariat into the political struggle, imbuing it with a sense of organisation, firmness, and militant purposefulness. Moreover, the workers' participation in the movement helped them to realise the strength of their class and united them with other social and political groups fighting for national liberation. At the same time, since the leading role in the national liberation struggle usually belonged to bourgeois (sometimes even pre-bourgeois) social segments, participation in it concealed the specific nature of the class interests and particular tasks of the proletariat.

Such was the situation—complex and contradictory—in which the working class took shape and grew and primary forms of the labour movement appeared in step with the development of capitalism.

Indicatively, even in its embryonic stages the struggle of hired labour in colonies and dependent countries was beginning to reveal many characteristics inherent in the movement of the proletariat of developed capitalist states. It started with strikes: they were spontaneous and unorganised, but nonetheless revealed a tendency

on the part of the workers to pool their efforts. It was in the process of strikes and other actions that the proletarians in colonies and semi-colonies took their first steps in uniting and forming their own organisations, initially by participating in various medieval-type corporations, and later by forming more contemporary unions and associations (and even parties, as in Latin America), which in most instances were headed by representatives of the national bourgeoisie. Prior to the new period in history, which would be inaugurated by the 1905-07 popular revolution in Russia, the working class in many of these countries was already acting as a notable force.

LATIN AMERICA

The Situation Within the Capitalist System and the Formation of the Proletariat

In Latin America, the age of national and democratic movements, which was inaugurated by the war of Haiti and the Spanish colonies for their independence, lasted more than a century and a half. After the fall of the Spanish colonial system, which had taken shape in the era of the primitive accumulation of capital, and the proclamation of independence by Brazil, a whole group of politically independent states formed where there had once been colonies. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century only Guiana in South America and a number of Caribbean countries remained in colonial dependence on Britain, France, Spain, and Holland.

The attainment of political emancipation and the creation of independent states were a vital prerequisite for the advance of Latin American countries along the capitalist path and the formation of the proletariat. Latin American states embarked on this path almost 200 years later than Britain and half a century later than the US and France; they experienced the grim oppression of the legacy of colonialism replete with slave-owning and, as a result, lagged far behind Western Europe and North America economically. Their socio-political weakness enabled the United States, Britain, France, and, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Germany to render them dependent economically, militarily and in foreign policy. The Latin American countries fell into debt to the European powers and the US, which, under the pretext of recovering debts, sent expeditionary forces there which cruelly pillaged these countries and attempted to turn them into colonies again.

The majority of the Latin American states, such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and others, where the bulk of the population and the main economic potential of the continent were concentrated,

fought to preserve and consolidate their political sovereignty from encroachments by European powers or the US, end the plundering of their natural resources by foreign monopolies, and eliminate economic backwardness. The peoples of Cuba, which had fallen under American control following the Spanish-American war of 1898, and of Puerto Rico, which had also been seized by the US, as well as of other colonial possessions in the Caribbean waged a national liberation struggle for the creation of their own statehood.

Lenin viewed the Latin American states as politically independent countries financially dependent upon imperialism and close to the countries of Eastern and Southern Europe in their place within the capitalist system.¹ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century they also approximated them in the level of economic development. The industrial revolution was taking place in Latin America in the period under review. Large-scale machine production emerged there on the basis of the manufactory stage of capitalism in the town and of tropical plantations in the countryside. The preservation of slavery until the late 1880s in such countries as Brazil and Cuba seriously held back the transformation of the capitalist system into the dominant mode of production. Mention should also be made of the fact that capitalism in Latin America possessed national markets, even though they were relatively narrow due to the preservation of the vestiges of the pre-capitalist stage and the penetration of foreign capital. As a result, even acting primarily as suppliers of mineral and agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs, Latin American countries were still not agrarian and raw-material appendages of the imperialist states. They tried to enclose themselves with protectionist barriers, which substantially facilitated the development of national industries and led to the appearance of their own industrial and agricultural proletariat. The foreign capital which permeated Latin America was compelled to reckon with this.

The capital investments of the foreign powers in the economies of Latin American countries increased drastically in the late nineteenth century. Whereas in 1880 total foreign investments amounted to 1.5 billion dollars, by 1900 they more than doubled, reaching 3.5 billion dollars, and continued growing. Britain accounted for 2.1 billion dollars, or almost 70 per cent, France—0.6 billion, and Germany—0.5 billion.

The penetration of North American capital began to intensify. In the early twentieth century Latin America accounted for more than half of all the US foreign investments (285 out of 445 million

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Notebooks on Imperialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 715.

dollars). The lion's share of these investments—185 million dollars—was channelled into Mexico¹: 66.6 per cent of them were invested in railways, 20.3 per cent in mining and only 2.93 per cent in the textile industry. These and many other statistics refute the fabrications of the apologists for imperialism that it was precisely the penetration of foreign monopolies, particularly those of North America, that led to the creation of industries in Latin America, and that it was imperialism that inaugurated the development of capitalism in this region. In fact foreign monopolies were not in the least interested in such development; they concentrated their attention solely on mining and oil.

Foreign capital entrenched itself in the economies of many Latin American countries. In 1895, for example, 92 per cent of the industrial enterprises in Buenos Aires already belonged to foreign capital.² By the beginning of the twentieth century two-thirds of Chile's output of saltpetre—a major branch of the country's mining industry—was processed at enterprises belonging to British and partly North American capital.³ During these years US monopolies took control over more than 85 per cent of Mexico's oil producing lands and 58 per cent of its entire oil production.⁴

The incursion of foreign capital into Latin America was not a purely economic process; it was accompanied by wars which the imperialist powers provoked between Latin American states, the blockading and shelling of Latin American ports, the landing of marines, plots, and the overthrow of governments unsuitable to the imperialists.

As a result of the Pacific war (1879-1883) Chile seized provinces from Peru and Bolivia rich in saltpetre. Bolivia was also deprived of an exit to the sea. Behind Chile's rulers stood British capitalists, who were dissatisfied with the attempts of the governments of Peru and Bolivia to establish control over their natural resources. Both countries, which had been defeated in the war, became dependent on British, French, and North American creditors who dictated financial, credit, customs, and tax policies to them, ruined local industrialists and craftsmen, and bought up enterprises, estates, and lands for a song.

Having taken control of concessions to saltpetre mines in Chile, the British capitalists provoked a civil war in 1891 against the

¹ *The Economies of the Latin American Countries*, Part 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 25-26 (in Russian).

² Rubens Iscaro, *Orígen y desarrollo del movimiento sindical argentino*, Anteo, Buenos Aires, 1958, p. 39.

³ *Chile*, Moscow, 1965, p. 208 (in Russian).

⁴ *Essays on the Modern and Contemporary History of Mexico*, Moscow, 1960, p. 231 (in Russian).

government of President Balmaceda, which was upholding the country's national independence and the right to dispose of its manpower and natural resources. The Balmaceda government was overthrown as a result of British interference. A landlordist and financial oligarchy which came to power in Chile allowed the country to be plundered by foreign capital.

In 1902-1903 Britain, Germany, and Italy blockaded Venezuelan ports. Lenin assessed this operation as follows: "1903: Germany + Britain + Italy blockade Venezuela (shelled by the Germans) to extort payment of debts!"¹ This intervention was supported by the United States, which saddled the Venezuelan Government with an inequitable agreement with its North American creditors. In 1903 the US seized a portion of Panamanian territory which it turned into its own colonial enclave. "The United States takes Panama (1903)" was how Lenin characterised this event.

In 1895 the Cuban people, led by the great revolutionary democrat José Martí, rose up in armed struggle against the Spanish colonial yoke, proclaimed the independence of the Cuban Republic, and liberated a large portion of its territory. After the US declared war on Spain, its troops occupied Cuba and foisted a protectorate regime on it, having obtained favourable conditions for the expansion of American capital into this country.

Thus, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century imperialism, British imperialism in particular, attempted to deprive Latin American states of their political and economic independence. "Big finance capital of one country can always buy up competitors in another, politically independent country and constantly does so.... Economic 'annexation' is *fully* 'achievable' without political annexation and is widely practised. In the literature on imperialism you will constantly come across indications that Argentina, for example, is in reality a 'trade colony' of Britain, or that Portugal is in reality a 'vassal' of Britain, etc. And that is actually so: economic dependence upon British banks, indebtedness to Britain, British acquisition of their railways, mines, land, etc., enable Britain to 'annex' these countries economically without violating their political independence."²

The transformation of Latin American states into dependent countries had an effect on the features of capitalist development in them and on their social structure and class struggle. Adapting the industries of Latin American countries to its own needs, foreign capital made extensive use of their social and economic backwardness and cheap labour in its own interests.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Notebooks on Imperialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 514.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 44.

Imperialism collaborated with the local oligarchy—big landowners, livestock breeders, plantation owners, and exporters. Rodney Arismendi, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uruguay, pointed to the connection between the subjugation of Latin America to foreign capital and the domination of latifundia: "Latifundia left a distinct imprint on the development of capitalism, distorting it, causing instability and narrowness on the domestic market and subordination to the foreign market, thus producing dependence on imperialism. From the social standpoint, latifundia took hold of the soul of broad segments of the native bourgeoisie and deprived it of its desire to struggle for democratic and national goals and of its determination to effect bourgeois-democratic transformations and to do away with this representative of its historical enemy—feudalism."¹

The incursion of foreign monopolies had a pernicious effect on the local economy, slowing down industrial growth rates and intensifying its lagging. Patriotically inclined circles of the big and petty bourgeoisie which held the reins of power in a number of countries, tried to raise import duties and establish state control over natural resources. Such attempts were made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Nicaragua; in a number of instances, however, interference on the part of Britain, the US, and other imperialist powers led to the removal of governments which had stood opposed to imperialism and their replacement with pro-imperialist regimes.

Nonetheless, neither the incursion of foreign capital nor the preservation and consolidation of latifundia could interrupt the natural process of the development of capitalism in industry, agriculture, and other economic branches. Of course, the plundering of the Latin American countries by foreign capital, the dominance of latifundia, political instability, and the illiteracy of the broad masses seriously slowed down their economic growth. The industrial revolution dragged out nearly an entire century in Latin America, and proceeded very unevenly in different countries. For example, the transition from the manufactory to the machine stage in the textile industry of Mexico and Brazil took place as early as the first half of the nineteenth century, while in Peru this occurred at the turn of the twentieth century, and even later in Colombia, Venezuela, and Central America.

The pace of railway construction was very slow, a fact which is attested to by the figures for 1890. By this time Mexico and Argentina had 9,800 km of railways each, Brazil—9,500, Cuba—only 1,731, and Uruguay and Paraguay—1,367 km.

¹ R. Arismendi, *Problemas de una revolución continental*, Ediciones Pueblos Unidos, Montevideo, 1962, p. 443.

Foreign companies which had gained control of rail construction tried to secure the export of mineral raw materials and farm produce and satisfy the interests of big exporters, without concerning themselves with the needs of local industry.

Machine production in the most developed Latin American countries applied to the textile and a number of other branches of the consumer industry. Machine-building was virtually absent. Nonetheless, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, and Chile had small smelting works, and metalworking was fairly well developed. Small-scale manufactories and crafts were of primary importance.

The urban proletariat of Latin America numbered approximately 600,000 persons by the late nineteenth century. Along with plantation workers and part of the low-paid personnel employed in transport, trade, and the service sphere, the army of the proletariat amounted to 1.5-2 million persons.¹

In *Argentina* the number of the gainfully employed population was 860,000 in 1869. Manufactories and crafts accounted for 280,000 of them, agriculture for 188,000, transport for 24,000, and trade for 40,000. Most numerous among the craftsmen and workers were sewers (98,000), followed by weavers (93,000), shoemakers (15,000), joiners (14,000), and carpenters (9,000).² After the 1872-1876 economic crisis, the transition to machine production accelerated. The stream of European immigrants intensified; prior to 1880 immigration had amounted to only 10,000 persons a year; between 1881 and 1890, 64,000 persons came to this country annually, and 112,000 per annum in the early twentieth century. In Buenos Aires 60 per cent of the population were immigrants, many of them workers, including skilled ones. Whereas in 1887 Argentina numbered only 42,321 hired hands, by 1895 this figure had almost doubled, reaching 72,761.³ In 1895 proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in town and country already comprised more than half the population (54.5 per cent), the petty bourgeoisie—over a fourth (28.3 per cent), big and middle traders—14.5 per cent, landowners and the big bourgeoisie—2.7 per cent.

More or less similar processes, complicated by the legacy of slavery (abolished in 1888), were observed in *Brazil*. The emancipation, without land, of 800,000 slaves (the country's population stood at 14 million) was an important prerequisite for the country's development along the capitalist path and for the formation of the modern proletariat. As early as 1872 Engels anticipated this as follows: "It was absurd to imagine that the slaves of Cuba and Brazil, or the

¹ *The Proletariat of Latin America*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 16-17 (in Russian).

² Rubens Iscaro, *História del movimiento sindical*, Vol. III, Buenos Aires, 1973, pp. 15-16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

population of China and India, could be at once developed in associative labourers, they must first be made free labourers before they could be emancipated."¹

Whereas before the abolition of slavery Brazil received 30,000-50,000 immigrants a year, afterwards the figure was upwards of 100,000. A total of 1.3 million immigrants entered the country from 1887 to 1897. There began extensive internal migrations from the arid northeast to the rapidly developing industrial area of São Paulo and Amazonas, where a "rubber fever" had started. Whereas in 1872 Amazonas had a population of no more than 340,000, by 1890 the figure exceeded 480,000, reaching 1.1 million by 1906. During the last decade of the nineteenth century the number of immigrants in São Paulo grew sixfold; in 1900, the city's population consisted of 770,000 Brazilians and 230,000 immigrants.²

The textile and food branches figured prominently in Brazil's industry. The concentration of production was still weak, with small and tiny enterprises of the handicraft type predominating. However, the construction of electric power stations was already developing in the São Paulo area (an 8,000-hp capacity station was commissioned in 1901), and separate machine-based industrial enterprises were in operation. In the 1880s and 1890s Brazil had approximately 300,000-400,000 hired hands, a third of which comprised industrial and transport workers.³ By 1907 the number of industrial personnel had risen to 151,000 persons.

In *Chile* the size of the proletariat had reached approximately 100,000 by 1875, and 200,000-250,000 by the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴ Of the 1873 *Mexican* population of 3.7 million, only 43,000 were employed in industry (32,000 in textiles). By the end of the nineteenth century Mexico's working class numbered 200,000. In 1880 Mexico's textile mills employed 13,000 persons; in 1901 the figure was 51,000. Half of the output was produced by four enterprises employing 12,000 workers. These enterprises belonged primarily to French capitalists.⁵

In *Cuba*, the 1899 census registered 359,000 day-labourers (out of a population of 1,573,000); however, the number of factory em-

¹ *The General Council of the First International. 1871-1872. Minutes*, p. 254.

² N. Werneck Sodré, *Formação histórica do Brasil*, São Paulo, 1967, p. 308.

³ B. I. Koval, *A History of the Brazilian Proletariat*, Moscow, 1970, p. 52 (in Russian).

⁴ Hermán Ramírez Hecochea, *Historia del movimiento obrero en Chile*, Santiago, 1956, pp. 73, 199.

⁵ Yu. I. Vizgunova, *The Working Class of Modern Mexico*, Moscow, 1973, p. 17 (in Russian).

ployees was relatively small—93,000.¹ There were approximately 10,000 people employed in the manufacturing industry of *Peru* at the start of the twentieth century.² According to the 1889 census, some 25,000 persons were working at factory-type enterprises in *Uruguay*.³

Thus, the bulk of workers was concentrated in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, and Cuba, as well as in Puerto Rico and the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe. The formation of the modern working class was at the initial stage in Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and particularly in the Central American countries.

The bulk of the proletariat was concentrated in the light, food, tobacco, and construction industries. There also appeared contingents of printers, transport workers, and electrical engineers. An important role was played by trade and office workers. At the same time the ranks of miners and oil-men, as well as farm hands began to swell rapidly. This was caused by the channelling of the main flow of the capital investments of foreign monopolies and firms into the aforementioned economic branches, as well as into transport.

In the Central American and Caribbean countries with their traditionally plantation, monocultural economic orientation which met primarily the needs of the world market, the formation of the proletariat was due mainly to the expansion of sugar and banana plantations and to the construction of modern ports.

A great influence on the nature of the development of the proletariat and its socio-economic and political constitution was exerted by the concrete source of the formation of a particular segment of hired labourers. The ranks of the proletariat were replenished from the local population only in those branches where the capitalists found it profitable to preserve patriarchal relations and utilise the system of forced labour. The local freely hired worker who had not broken ties with the land and traditional way of life found it difficult to adapt to large-scale production. This caused a turnover of the work force and a shortage of free hands.

As a result, a system of labour relations was established in many countries under which the worker was kept at an enterprise with the aid of debts. This system encompassed many regions and branches. It was particularly widespread on plantations and in the extractive

¹ A. M. Zorina, *The Labour Movement in Cuba*, Moscow, 1975, p. 85 (in Russian); J. Rivero Mufiz, *El movimiento laboral durante el periodo 1906-1911*, Las Villas, 1962, p. 189.

² J. Del Prado, *40 años de lucha*, Lima, 1968, p. 5.

³ F. R. Pintos, *Historia del movimiento obrero de Uruguay*, Montevideo, 1960, p. 25.

industries, where it became entrenched owing, among other things, to the great distance which separated production localities from urban and commercial centres. In the factory production which had begun to develop labour protection was non-existent, and minors and women were widely exploited.

Among the main contingents of the proletariat were miners (predominantly from the local population) and farm (including plantation) workers. In Chile, for example, there were some 33,000 miners as early as 1875.¹ The class self-determination of these groups was hindered by such factors as illiteracy, appalling oppression, and poverty.

Miners and plantation hands virtually lived and worked in conditions of penal servitude. The working day lasted from 10 to 16 hours. Employees were paid in vouchers. A system of fines was widespread. Archaic forms of labour dependence were preserved and purposely maintained, and the hired hands' freedom of movement and the right to choose an employer under whom to work were limited. Many foreign enterprises were enclosed by barbed wire, workers were not allowed to leave their jobs voluntarily, etc. The formation of trade unions and organisation of strikes were equalled to criminal actions. The awakening of the class and political awareness of these contingents of workers was likewise delayed by life far from major cities and by their isolation from other strata of the working people.

Another important source of the formation of the army of hired labour were European immigrants. It was harder to apply the usual methods of exploitation to them than to local workers, as they upheld their interests better and were not held down to the land or constrained by other traditional ties. If worse came to worst they could move to another country in search of more favourable conditions. However, since they possessed comparatively high skills, employers eagerly used them to operate machines or carry out functions requiring a high level of expertise.

The stratum of immigrants among urban craftsmen was also rather considerable. Their situation was equally difficult. However, their higher level of development and relatively more favourable living and working conditions made for a different degree of class consciousness. It is not fortuitous that workers in this category, namely, railwaymen, dockers, and tram operators, were among the first to form large trade unions.

Characteristic of the Latin American proletariat were such features as ethnic diversity, a particular structural complexity, and sharp differences in the socio-economic situation of individual

¹ *Hermán Ramírez Necochea, op. cit., p. 73.*

strata. All of this served to split the working class in Latin American countries, which in turn caused its contingents to embark on the path of a conscious class struggle and to form trade and political organisations at different times.

Labour Organisations and Ideological and Political Currents

The great unevenness in capitalist development in different countries on the continent was also a factor behind the unevenness in the formation of the labour movement in them and its emancipation from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology. By the beginning of the 1870s there were no independent political organisations of the proletariat in a single country, even though the working class had amassed a certain amount of experience in class battles and had already formed a few trade unions in a number of places. In most cases, however, the proletariat still remained unaware of its class interests. Workers frequently supported liberal bourgeois movements whose revolutionary thrust, which manifested itself in the 1850s and 1860s in the struggle to uphold the political independence of their countries, in the enactment of anti-clerical agrarian reforms, and in the struggle against slavery, was stultified (it was preserved only in a number of Central American and Caribbean countries, as well as in backward countries of South America).

The landlordist revolutionary character of the period of the war waged by Haiti and the Spanish colonies for their independence and the bourgeois revolutionary nature of the second revolutionary tidal wave in Latin America (similar to the Civil War and Reconstruction in the US) began to give way to the revolutionary character of the petty bourgeoisie, urban lower classes, and proletariat. This process was accompanied by the dissemination of pre-Marxian forms of socialist ideology which reflected the aspirations and prejudices of this new bloc of progressive classes and social strata.

The richest experience at the turn of the century was amassed by the labour movement of *Argentina*.

Trade union and mutual-aid organisations of printers, joiners, carpenters, and construction workers had been formed here by the early 1870s.

Speaking at a session of the General Council of the First International in early 1871, Engels reported that contacts were established with Argentinian printers through the Madrid section. "Correspondence might be opened with a view to form sections."¹ Such a section was founded in Buenos Aires in early 1872 at a meeting of French immigrants. The section asked the General Council to admit it

¹ *The General Council of the First International, 1870-1871, Minutes*, p. 104.

to the International; the request was granted. Within half a year its membership rose to 273 persons.¹

An Italian section of the International appeared in mid-1872 in Buenos Aires, which was followed by a Spanish one. Their activities were coordinated by the Federal Council, which maintained contact with the General Council of the International in New York. The publication of the socialist newspaper *El Trabajador* was organised. In 1874 sections were operating in Córdoba and Rosario as well.

Raymond Wilmart (Wilmo), a participant in the Paris Commune and a delegate to the Hague Congress of the First International who corresponded with Karl Marx, arrived in Argentina in September 1872. He initiated the vigorous promulgation of the ideas of scientific socialism among Argentinian workers, including the unions of joiners and tailors.

The 1872-1876 economic crisis had an adverse effect on the labour movement in Argentina. With the slump in the movement the sections of the International began to decay and fall apart. This was largely the result of the disorganising activity of the Spanish Bakuninists, who exhibited a particular interest in South America in the mid-1870s, sending their emissaries there.²

An upsurge in the labour movement began in the second half of the 1870s. The year 1878 witnessed a printers' strike, 1887—a successful general strike by shoemakers, and 1888—a railwaymen's strike (the police were set against them, as a result of which many workers were wounded and over 100 persons arrested).

The long struggle ended in the abolishment of the former hiring system, which had provided for the issuance of special booklets in which remarks about the workers' "behaviour" were made. Printers achieved the prohibition of the labour of minors, wage increases, set working hours, and a reduction in the working day to a maximum of 10 hours in winter and 12 hours in summer.³

Labour organisations began to emerge in the late 1870s. The example of the printers, who formed their union in 1878, was followed by carpenters and joiners (1885), bakers (1886), train engineers and stokers (1887), etc. By 1895 Argentina already had over 50 workers' and craftsmen's trade unions.⁴

¹ *The First International*, Part 2 (1870-1876), Moscow, 1965, p. 565 (in Russian); *The General Council of the First International. 1871-1872. Minutes*, p. 462.

² James Guillaume, *L'Internationale. Documents et souvenirs*, t. IV, P.-V. Stock, Éditeur, Paris, 1910, p. 193.

³ Benito Marianetti, *Argentina: realidad y perspectivas*, Editorial Platina, Buenos Aires, 1964, p. 285.

⁴ Rubens Iscaro, *Historia del movimiento sindical*, Vol. II, Buenos Aires, 1973, p. 268.

After the introduction of the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany, a group of German Social-Democrats based themselves in Argentina: outstanding among them was one Kun, a former Chairman of the Brunswick Party Committee, a tailor by trade. In 1882 they founded the Vorwärts Social-Democratic club, which played a great role in propagating the ideas of scientific socialism in the country and in creating a socialist party. The International Socialist Circle, which included French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Belgian immigrants as well as Argentinians, was formed in Buenos Aires in 1888.

The struggle between Socialists and anarchists within the Argentinian labour movement intensified drastically during these years. Between 1885 and 1890 the prominent anarchist leader Enrico Malatesta was active in Argentina, and anarchist newspapers began coming out. They did everything they could to impede the formation of an independent labour party and sought to establish their control over trade unions, elbowing the Socialists out of them.

However, the Argentinian labour movement at that time was already coming under the strong influence of the Second International, in the Constituent Congress of which Argentinian Socialists took part.

In accordance with the decisions of the Second International, an organising committee for preparing the celebration of May Day, 1890, was formed in Buenos Aires. In March 1890 it convened a session of representatives from 18 trade unions, circles and mutual-aid societies. They created the International Committee, which included three delegates from each society. The Committee resolved: 1) to mark May Day with rallies; 2) to create a federation of Argentinian workers; 3) to print a newspaper defending the workers' interests; 4) to petition the Chamber of Deputies with a demand for the adoption of laws for the benefit of the workers. A petition was drawn up containing the following demands: to introduce an 8-hour working day, ease working conditions for women, prohibit the hiring of children under the age of 14, introduce a 6-hour working day for juveniles aged 14-16, and prohibit them from working the night shift, make Sunday a compulsory day of rest, institute an inspection service for averting job-related accidents, introduce accident insurance, enact laws against the production of imitation foods, etc. Twenty thousand signatures were collected under the petition. Demonstrations and meetings were held on May 1, 1890, which drew 3,000 persons.¹

The May Day demonstration uplifted the militant spirit of the workers.

¹ Leonardo Paso, *Historia del origen de los partidos politicos en la Argentina* (1810-1918), Centro de Estudios, Bs. Aires, 1972, pp. 463-64.

The year 1890 saw strikes staged by 6,000 unionised carpenters, by 3,000 joiners, who had created the International Society of Joiners, Cabinetmakers and Auxiliary Workers in 1886, and others.¹

Argentina's first Marxist newspaper—*El obrero*—appeared in late 1890; it came out under the slogan "Working Men of All Countries, Unite!" The leading article, entitled "Our Programme", stated: "We are entering the arena of the struggle of this republic's political parties as the forefront fighters of the proletariat, which is only beginning to emerge from the mass of the poor.... The new class is inspired by the noble teaching of modern scientific socialism, the basic theoretical propositions of which—the materialist conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus value—are the great discoveries of our immortal teacher Karl Marx."² The history of Argentina and its contemporary political situation, the article went on, should be viewed in the light of the laws of dialectical materialism as the history of the struggle between classes. The newspaper assessed the establishment of the bourgeois regime in the country as a progressive phenomenon, but unmasked it as a system of the more intensive exploitation of the workers, and called upon them not to forget the ultimate goal in the day-to-day struggle—the building of a communist society.

The propaganda work of *El obrero* contributed to the convening of a workers' congress in August 1891, which proclaimed the creation of the Workers' Federation of the Argentine Republic. The Federation sent its report to the Brussels Congress of the Second International. However, the economic crisis and the hostility of the anarchists towards the Federation led to its dissolution.

The Socialist Association of Buenos Aires was founded in December 1892 as the nucleus of the future party. Socialist groupings functioned alongside it which were formed according to nationality: the German club Vorwärts, the French club Les égaux, and the Italian club Fascio dei lavoratori. At a conference of representatives of these organisations in 1893 a decision was made to begin publication of a weekly entitled *La vanguardia* as the propagandist of scientific socialism and the defender of the cause of the working class.³ Its editor was Juan Baptista Justo, the first translator of Marx's *Capital* into Spanish. Other socialist newspapers (*Avenir social*, *La montaña*, etc.) began to come out. All of this prepared the convocation of the constituent Congress of the Socialist Party, which coincided with the upsurge of the labour movement and with new strike battles. Twenty-six strikes were registered in Argentina in

¹ Dardo Cuneo, *Juan B. Justo y las luchas sociales en la Argentina*, ALPE, Buenos Aires, 1956, p. 54.

² Leonardo Paso, *op. cit.*, p. 468.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

1896 alone (staged by glaziers, watchmakers, printers, railwaymen, metalworkers, workers in the food and tobacco industries, etc.).¹

Represented at the constituent Congress of the Socialist Labour Party of Argentina (June 1896) were 833 party members (387 of them were Argentinian citizens) from 35 political and trade union associations. The Congress adopted a Declaration of Principles, a minimum programme, and party Rules. The Declaration stated that the "revolution, which gives rise to resistance by the privileged class, can be effected by force of the organised proletariat"; at the same time it laid stress on the possibility of the proletariat coming to power on condition that the bourgeoisie would respect the existing political rights and expand them by enacting universal suffrage.²

In his address to the Congress Justo said: "The Socialist Party is first and foremost a party of the workers, the proletarians, those who possess nothing other than their labour power. Nonetheless, the doors of the party are open wide for persons from other classes who wish to enter it, subordinating their interests to the interests of the proletarian class. It is important to underscore our independence from any interests of the capitalists and petty bourgeois, though it should not be thought that in all instances and on all issues they are opposed to ours.... We are starting out 30 years later than the Socialist parties of Europe. Since we are beginning our cause later, we must begin better, availing ourselves of all the experience that has already been amassed by the world-wide labour movement." Justo noted that the Executive Committee's draft Rules were drawn up in the spirit of democracy and equality for all members of the party.³

In 1900 the party was named the Argentinian Socialist Party. Among its founders were representatives of the progressive Latin American intelligentsia—José Ingenieros, L. Lugones, and Rubén Darío. Discussed at the Fourth Party Congress (1901) was the agrarian programme, which included the urgent demands of the rural workers (abolition of special taxes on farm produce, introduction of a progressive direct tax on ground rent, lifting of taxes on small property, improvement of living and working conditions for rural workers, etc.). A total of 1,733 party members were represented at the Fifth Congress (1903).⁴

The Argentinian Socialists took an active part in the election campaigns of the 1890s. It was only at the 1904 election that they achieved success, putting a Socialist—Alfredo Palacios—in parliament. When the police soon afterwards fired upon the May Day

¹ V. García Costa, *Alfredo Palacios*, Buenos Aires, 1971, pp. 23-24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³ Dardo Guneo, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

⁴ V. García Costa, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

demonstration in the capital (40,000 persons took part in it) Palacios exposed the perpetrators of this crime in the Chamber of Deputies. The Argentinian Socialist Party, Palacios said, "is a class party which supports the demands of the workers, and wherever workers may protest against the existence of the capitalist system, the Socialist Party will support this protest".¹ Owing to Palacios' initiative a law was passed on Sunday being a compulsory day of rest.²

The Socialist Party unmasked the anti-popular policy of the ruling oligarchy. "Our upper class," it stated, "betrayed the country to British capital and in collusion with it is mercilessly exploiting it, spilling its blood abundantly."³ Safeguarding Argentina's political independence, the Socialists simultaneously strove to educate the workers in the spirit of internationalism and came out against the attempts of the bourgeoisie to infect the labour movement with the poison of nationalism. When a chauvinistic campaign was unleashed against Chile in 1898-1902, an arms race was exposed at rallies organised by the Socialist Party and fraternal solidarity with the Chilean working people proclaimed. During the struggle waged by the Cuban people against the colonial yoke of Spain the party advanced the slogan "Long live Cuba!"

The Argentinian Socialists were active in almost all the congresses of the Second International. At the 1904 Amsterdam Congress they presented a report on emigration and immigration, which contained a protest against the persecution of immigrants and a call for international solidarity (specifically, they called upon the workers of Europe to boycott Argentinian vessels in protest against repressions unleashed by the country's oligarchical government).⁴ The Argentinian Socialists had a permanent representative in the International Socialist Bureau since its establishment in 1900.⁵

The Socialists made a great contribution to the development of the trade union movement in Argentina, fighting with the splitting tactics of the anarcho-syndicalists. Although attempts were made to create a trade-union association in 1896 and 1900, they ended in failure. The Argentinian Workers' Federation was formed in 1901 as an opposition organisation. Led by anarchists, this association recognised boycotts and sabotage alone as methods of struggle. Another trade union centre emerged in 1902—the General Union of

¹ García Costa, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³ Leonardo Paso, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

⁴ *Bureau Socialiste International*, Vol. 1, p. 147-50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Workers. The Socialists condemned the split in the trade union movement.

The Argentinian Socialist Party, which had adopted the finest traditions of the revolutionary-democratic movement in the country and sought to assimilate the experience of the European working class movement, made a substantial contribution to the awakening of the class consciousness of the Argentinian workers, to their organisation, and the consolidation of their international ties. It did much to spread Marxism in South America and undertook the first attempts at concrete activity from the standpoint of the working class and of scientific socialism. However, the eclecticism of its theoreticians (Justo unsuccessfully tried to combine Marxism with positivism) and the invigoration of reformist trends in the party leadership prevented it from scoring substantial results. The anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists managed to divert a considerable portion of the workers towards "direct action". The sectarianism of the anarchists did not allow the Argentinian proletariat to take charge of the general democratic movement. In the 1890 and 1893 uprisings organised by Argentinian radicals the workers did not play an independent role. Taking advantage of the disunity in the general democratic and labour movements, the local oligarchy, aided by foreign imperialists, struck blows at the revolutionary movement in the country.

In *Brazil*, the development of the labour movement was slowed down by the preservation of the institution of slavery and its corresponding superstructure—the empire. Even in these conditions, however, workers and craftsmen managed to organise into unions and mutual-aid societies. Nineteen such societies were officially registered between 1872 and 1900.¹

The first job actions took place in the 1880s. In 1890, railwaymen, following a tough strike, won the right to a pension for long service. The year 1891 saw the first official decrees regulating the labour of minors at enterprises in Rio de Janeiro.

After the Paris Commune was defeated some of its participants emigrated to Brazil. The Thiers government tried in vain to get them extradited. It was approximately at this time that German workers—members of the First International Adolph Wegmann and P. Kuller who maintained correspondence with Engels, arrived here. The documents of the International Working Men's Association sent by Engels were used as propaganda materials for the creation of workers' societies.² With Engels' assistance Wegmann and Kuller

¹ L. Rodrigues, *Conflito industrial e sindicalismo no Brasil*, São Paulo, 1966, p. 149.

² *The First International*, Part 2, pp. 567-68.

established contact with Raymond Wilmart and the Argentinian section of the First International.

The name of Marx first became known in Brazil in the early 1870s, when the Brazilian press began to cover the International in relation to the Paris Commune. *A reforma*, the newspaper of the Brazilian Liberal Party, and *O seis de março*, which was printed in the northeast of the country, carried articles in late 1871 which pointed to the work of Marx as the leader of the International and as a scholar. Marx's philosophical works and *Capital* were already well known in Brazil in the 1880s. This is attested to by the works of Tobias Barreto, I. Cunha, and particularly of Euclides da Cunha.

The main political struggle in the country was waged around the issues of the abolition of slavery and the overthrow of the monarchy. Workers took part in this struggle. Lasting a long time, it ended in 1889 in the overthrow of the monarchy and the proclamation of a republic. Lenin pointed to this as one of the milestones in late nineteenth-century world history.¹

The republican government was forced to introduce by a special decree an amendment into the criminal code granting workers the right to strike.

A Socialist Congress drawing 400 delegates from various Brazilian states was held in 1892 in Rio de Janeiro. The organisation created at the Congress, which called itself the Socialist Labour Party, sent the Zurich Congress of the Second International in 1893 a report signed by José Winiger, August Lux, Otto Bendix, and Nikolaus Schnaider.² At the Zurich Congress itself this party was represented by Wilhelm Liebknecht and the worker Robert Seidel, who had come to Zurich from São Paulo.

One of the first Brazilian Marxists was the physician Silvério Fontes, who founded a socialist centre in the city of Santos, the newspaper *A questão social* and a journal of a propagandistic nature. From its very first issue *A questão social* declared that it would follow the Marxist trend. Fontes began circulating issues of the Portuguese edition of the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels among Brazilian workers.

The second Socialist Congress (May 28-June 1, 1902) took place in São Paulo. It drew 44 delegates from labour organisations in various parts of the country. The Congress adopted an action programme which contained a series of demands of a general democratic and a specifically proletarian nature (including recognition of the legality of strikes, legal limitations on the working day, and the enactment of other laws favouring workers and peasants, particularly

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Notebooks on Imperialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 512.

² Georges Haupt, *La Deuxième Internationale 1889-1914*, Editions Mouton, Paris, La Haye, 1964, p. 148.

in the sphere of health care, with the emphasis on health protection for women and children, and the formation of labour chambers, trade union associations and opposition alliances for the purpose of improving the workers' condition). The Congress recommended that the workers be encouraged to take an active part in public life and in controlling the payment of income taxes so as to ease the tax burden of the poor. It also called for a struggle to win power on the municipal, state and federation levels for the purpose of converting organs of power from a weapon of capitalist exploitation into a weapon for the elimination of the economic and political monopoly of the ruling class.

As indicated in the Congress manifesto, which was edited by a commission headed by Fontes and published in August 1902 on behalf of the General Council of the Brazilian Socialist Party (its new name), these demands constituted the minimum programme.¹

The party called upon the workers to make wide use of the weapon of strikes in their struggle. Wage increases and prompt payment of wages were the general demands. Mass-scale strikes of an economic nature were staged in 1903. They were organised by labour leagues, trade unions and opposition societies. One of the major actions of the Brazilian proletariat was the general textile workers' strike in Rio de Janeiro in August 1903, in which the demands were higher wages and a shorter working day. The strike, which was led by the capital's textile workers' federation, lasted 20 days and involved as many as 40,000 workers. However, the cruel repressions of the authorities and the indecisiveness of the federation's leaders prevented the workers from achieving success.

The year 1903 also saw strikes staged by printers, shoemakers and coachmen (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo). A number of them proved to be successful (in some places the working day was shortened to 9½ hours). The strike movement continued to grow in 1904, engulfing the capital and the states of São Paulo, Bahia and Rio Grande do Sul.

With the wave of strikes in 1903-1904 on the upswing, socialist circles and international workers' clubs began forming in many Brazilian cities (Euclides da Cunha was one of the founders of such a circle in San José do Rio Pardo). These organisations and the labour press mounted a campaign of solidarity with Russian revolutionaries who were victims of the tsarist regime. Thus, on August 7, 1904, a 5,000-man rally protesting tsarist repressions was held in São Paulo. Taking part in the rally were delegations from labour organisations of other cities, as well as Italian, Argentinian and Uruguayan immigrants.

¹ *Estudos Sociais*, No. 12, 1962, p. 415.

The upsurge of the labour movement and the spread of socialist ideas alarmed the ruling oligarchy. Like in Argentina, it attempted to split the labour movement by playing on nationalistic sentiments. In September 1903 the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies adopted the first law on the deportation of "undesirable foreigners" so as to ensure "national security and public order". Another law of this type was enacted in 1904. The government simultaneously unleashed a wave of repressions against the labour organisations. Troops were set upon strikers, participants in workers' rallies were shot, and strike leaders were exiled to the territory of Acre, where they were turned into slaves on rubber plantations.

In *Mexico*, the triumph of the reform movement in the 1860s, in which craftsmen and workers took an active part, enabled them to take their first steps in organising. However, civil war and the intervention of Britain, France, and Spain slowed down the process of the progression of the labour movement from the general democratic movement. Even though the craftsmen and workers fought selflessly for the triumph of the cause of the republic, the bourgeois government tried to constrain the incipient labour movement and place it under its control by combining repressions with a number of paternalistic measures. Striking was punished by lengthy prison terms and heavy fines, as was the formation of associations for the purpose of seeking wage hikes. The formation of mutual-aid and insurance societies was all that was allowed. The Juarez and Lerdo de Tejada governments even furnished these organisations with material support.

The Circle of Mexican Workers was formed on September 16, 1872 and was given the epithet of "Great" in 1874. In 1876 this organisation already had a membership of more than 8,000 and came forth with the initiative for the convocation of a workers' congress. The first Workers' Congress opened in Mexico City on March 6, 1876, drawing delegations from different parts of the country. Although adherents of mutualism predominated at this Congress (as at the second Congress in 1880), Socialists and anarchists were in attendance as well. The manifesto adopted contained the urgent demands of the working people (introduction of a minimum wage for different states and branches of the economy, recognition of the right to strike, access to education, improved working conditions for women, etc.).

In late 1871 members of the First International, who were in San Francisco, informed Marx of their plans to help organise a section of the Working Men's Association in Mexico. A similar attempt was made by the Spanish sections of the International. A year later the Mexican labour organisations established ties with the General Council in New York. It was precisely this group of Mexican Socialists

that later paved the way for the formation of the Socialist Party of Mexico.

The 1870s saw the dissemination in Mexico of Marx's *Capital*, and articles and pamphlets by Paul Lafargue and Jules Guesde. In 1877 the newspaper *El socialista* wrote: "The underlings of the rich are trying to prove in vain that socialism in Mexico is an exotic plant which cannot acclimatise.... Socialism in Mexico is not an exotic plant; it lives in this climate, the climate of horrifying poverty into which the blind greed of the rich has pushed the working classes." On June 3, 1884 the newspaper printed the *Communist Manifesto* in full.

Despite the bans and repressions, the workers won a number of strike battles in the first half of the 1870s. After the dictator Porfirio Díaz rose to power in 1876, the labour movement started to die down. Government agents took charge of the Great Circle leadership, and it was split apart. Trade unions were subjected to cruel repressions: activists were arrested and sent out of the country. Beginning in the 1880s the actions of the Mexican workers were directed more and more distinctly against the Díaz dictatorship, which was supported by foreign capital.

In these conditions the labour movement in Mexico proved to be under the great influence of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism (this was furthered by, among other things, the presence of many Spanish anarchists in the country). The socialist trend, which had been rather strong in the 1870s, was undergoing a lengthy crisis, and the leadership in the labour movement shifted to the anarchists.

In *Chile*, the number of mutual-aid societies grew rapidly beginning in the 1870s: in 1870 they numbered 13, in 1880—39, in 1890—76, and in 1900—150 (counting officially recognised and registered societies only).¹

Some 70 strikes took place in Chile between 1884 and 1888. In 1890 the first nation-wide strike flared up; it was accompanied by demonstrations demanding wage increments. The local authorities sent troops against the demonstrators: 50 persons were killed and 500 wounded in Valparaíso and over 100 were wounded in Santiago. Between 1891 and 1900 upwards of 300 labour conflicts were registered in the country, many of which were also put down by armed force. In May 1903 troops were sent against striking dockers in Valparaíso, and again there were killed and wounded.² The Chilean army, trained in the barbaric annihilation of the Indian population, stood out for its unbelievable cruelty in suppressing the actions of the workers, whom it considered the "inferior race".

¹ Moisés Poblete Troncoso, Ben G. Burnett, *The Rise of the Latin American Labor Movement*, Bookman Associates, New York, 1960, p. 58.

² Rubens Iscaro, *História del movimiento sindical*, Vol. II, p. 82.

The acuteness of the class battles urgently prompted the working people to form their own political organisation. The Democratic Party emerged in 1887 on the basis of craftsmen's and workers' unions. Though petty-bourgeois in its ideology and political orientation, it was largely proletarian in its social base. The party programme, adopted in 1889, stated that social and economic liberation was indivisible from political liberation.¹ The Democratic Party organised rallies and strikes in defence of the workers' demands. When British capitalists and the Chilean oligarchy overthrew Balmaceda in 1891, this party came out against the oligarchy and assumed patriotic positions. The left wing, headed by the worker Luis Emilio Recabarren, gradually proceeded to embrace socialist positions. Recabarren founded a number of periodicals which upheld the interests of the proletariat.

Several attempts were made in the 1890s to form an independent socialist party. L. Olea was a vigorous promoter of this and a convinced supporter of Marxism. The Social Labour Congress was held in Valparaíso in 1902; Recabarren was one of those in attendance (192 delegates represented over 20,000 organised workers there).² A convention of Chilean trade unions took place in Santiago in May 1904. The founding of a proletarian political party, however, was hampered by the predominance of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism in the Chilean labour movement.

During the campaign unleashed by the Chilean oligarchy against the Argentinian people in 1902, the Chilean Socialists gave a fitting rebuff to the chauvinists, organised meetings of solidarity with the Argentinian working class, and unmasked the militarist policy of the Chilean rulers.

In *Uruguay*, a printers' society was created in 1870. Similar organisations emerged in a number of other trades as well. It was only in 1885, however, that it proved possible to incorporate these unions into a federation of Uruguayan workers. The first national congress of workers was held in 1896; the Workers' Socialist Centre, which actively spread Marxism, was founded at that time in Montevideo.

In *Peru*, the situation of the workers worsened drastically following the country's defeat in the Pacific war and as a result of its enslavement by foreign capital. Strike actions took place in the late 1870s on cotton and sugar-cane plantations; in 1883 printers went on strike, followed by bakers in 1887. The strikers demanded wage increases and a 9-hour working day. In 1892 tobacco workers staged a strike, in 1894—dockers, and in 1896—textile workers.³

¹ Luis Emilio Recabarren, *Obras escogidas*, Vol. I, Santiago, 1965, p. 6.

² Rubens Iscaro, *História del movimiento sindical*, Vol. II, p. 83.

³ R. Mac Lean y Estenos, *Sociología del Perú*, México, 1959, pp. 110-11.

Dockers went on strike again in 1904. It lasted 15 days; the assault on them by police was countered by a general strike which engulfed the entire capital zone of Lima-Caldo. Although the police killed one striker and made many arrests, the workers won a distinct victory—a 20 per cent wage increment. The job actions furthered the creation of proletarian organisations. One of them was the Craftsmen's Confederation, the leadership in which was seized by the anarchists. A socialist trend also took shape, headed by S. Giraldo. The first workers' congress was held in Lima in 1901. Giraldo took part in its proceedings, but supporters of mutualism predominated among the delegates. The Amalgamated Trade Union Assembly was formed.

In *Colombia*, both liberal and conservative governments persecuted even mutual-aid societies (in 1890, for example, such a workers' society which had formed in Bucaramanga was dissolved by order of the Governor¹). Mutual-aid societies, as well as trade unions (of tailors and shoemakers), which emerged in the 1890s and the early 1900s, were able to exist only if they enjoyed the support of the Catholic Church.

In *Venezuela*, urban hired workers comprised 19 per cent of the gainfully employed population in the late nineteenth century. They were engaged primarily in manufactories. In 1894 and 1895 workers and craftsmen from Caracas staged demonstrations and rallies protesting unemployment. The year 1896 witnessed the holding of the first workers' congress, which advocated an improvement in the workers' material welfare, the encouragement of the cooperative movement and the formation of the People's Party. Soon after this a newspaper began to be published under this name (*El partido popular*), but the party itself was not formed at the time.²

In *Cuba*, the progression of the labour movement from the general democratic, national liberation movement proceeded very slowly, since, unlike the rest of the Latin American countries, Cuba remained a colony until the late nineteenth century, after which it virtually became a protectorate of the US. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the institution of slavery was preserved in Cuba until the end of the 1880s. The Spanish and later the North American labour movement had a greater influence on Cuba than on any other Latin American country. Many workers, natives of the mother country, participated in class battles there.

The upsurge of the national liberation struggle, the war of 1868-1878 and the proclamation of the first republic in Cuba could not

¹ M. Urrutia Montoya, *Historia del sindicalismo en Colombia*, Bogotá, 1969, p. 81.

² E. S. Mercado, "Antecedentes del movimiento obrero venezolano".—*Semestre histórico* (Caracas), N. 1, 1975, p. 133.

but inspire the young Cuban proletariat; it was extremely active in this struggle, the leadership of which was assumed by landowners who had undergone embourgeoisement (primarily in the eastern regions). A revolutionary-democratic trend began to come to the fore among the patriots; its representatives connected the idea of national liberation with the social emancipation of the people.

A certain influence on the awakening of the labour movement in Cuba was exerted by the Paris Commune, which is attested to by the illegal leaflets spread throughout the country.¹

The first workers' congress was held in Havana in 1887, which was evidence of the growth of the political maturity of the Cuban proletariat. Its decisions were taken in the anarchist spirit, however.² The following year witnessed the emergence of the Workers' Alliance, which was under the influence of the anarchists. That year the Workers' Union was formed, which pursued a policy of conciliation and toed the line of the bourgeois party of autonomists.

The acknowledged leader of the Cuban working class at that time was E. Roig San Martín, who propagated the ideas of proletarian internationalism. May Day was first celebrated in Cuba in 1890 as a day of international proletarian solidarity.

The second workers' congress met in January 1892, drawing over a thousand delegates. The congress drew up a programme of demands, including the introduction of an 8-hour working day, measures against racial discrimination, labour protection for women and minors, and respect for the workers' right to organise. The left wing tabled a resolution demanding a struggle for socialism, and it was adopted. The resolution stated, among other things: "The congress believes that the working class will not achieve emancipation until it assimilates the ideas of revolutionary socialism."³ The idea of creating a political party of the proletariat was also advanced. Thus, Diego Vicente Tejera, a prominent figure in the Cuban labour movement, believed that "an independent political party of the working class should also figure" among the future political parties of the Cuban Republic. He pointed out that the intensification of the exploitation of the proletariat was due to the penetration of foreign capital, to its seizure of Latin America's natural resources and the subordination of the continent's economy to it, and called upon the proletariat to safeguard national independence.

The workers' congress of 1892 declared that the proletariat should take part in the liberation struggle. "It would be absurd," the resolution stated, "if a man who strove for personal freedom objected

¹ C. del Toro, *El movimiento obrero cubano en 1914*, La Habana, 1969, p. 46.

² A. M. Zorina, *The Labour Movement in Cuba*, p. 74.

³ *El movimiento obrero cubano. Documentos y artículos*, Tome I, 1865-1925, La Habana, 1975, p. 83.

to the collective freedom of an entire nation", even though the freedom for which this nation is aiming was relative freedom, since it consists in liberation from the wardship of a foreign nation.¹ The adoption of this resolution provided the colonial authorities a pretext for dissolving the congress.

In 1892 José Martí formed the Cuban Party of Revolutionary Democracy. Among its founders was the Socialist Carlos Baliño. Workers directly assisted in the publication of the central organ of this party, the newspaper *Patria*.

Cuban labour leaders Baliño, Tejera and others were active in the preparations for the national armed uprising of 1895 against the Spanish colonisers. The labour press called for the intensification of the struggle against Spanish rule.

The War of 1895-1898, which brought down Spanish rule in Cuba, was in effect a national liberation revolution, the base of which comprised peasants, workers, and craftsmen, as well as the urban petty bourgeoisie. The participation of workers and other working people in this revolution left a profoundly democratic imprint on its nature. It also revealed the ideological and organisational weaknesses of the proletariat, which was small numerically and still disunited as a class.

Following the occupation of Cuba by US troops in 1898, the proletarians began a series of job actions against the occupationist authorities. In September 1899 Cuban workers staged a general strike, demanding an 8-hour working day. In 1900 tobacco workers went on strike, followed by students and apprentices in Havana Province in 1902. Although the North American authorities sent troops against the strikers and made numerous arrests, they were nonetheless forced to agree to a shortening of the working day to a maximum of 9-10 hours in the municipal services. In 1899 the General League of Cuban Workers called upon the working people to struggle against the country's annexation by the United States.

The class consciousness of the workers grew. In early 1899 a group of Socialists set about forming a workers' independent political party. Tejera proposed calling it the Cuban Socialist Party. It existed only for a short time, however. In 1900 the People's Party emerged under Tejera's leadership (in 1901 it was renamed the People's Labour Party); however, its ideological and theoretical principles could not be called socialist, much less Marxist.

It was only after the withdrawal of American occupationist troops that Baliño succeeded in November 1903 in forming the first Marxist group in Cuba—the Club for Socialist Propaganda. In 1904 the Socialist Labour Party of the Island of Cuba was finally created

¹ Blas Roca, *Los fundamentos del socialismo en Cuba*, Habana, 1961, p. 178.

thanks to Baliño's efforts; it established contact with the Second International. The party's mouthpiece was the newspaper *La voz obrera*.

Cuba provided a particularly graphic example of how colonialism slowed down the transformation of the labour movement into an independent political force. The Cuban bourgeoisie took advantage of this to subordinate the workers to its ideological and political influence. The influence of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism with their repudiation of political struggle objectively played into the hands of both the colonial administration and the Cuban bourgeoisie.

* * *

At the turn of the century—somewhat later in comparison with more developed regions—the labour movement on the Latin American continent emerged from the general democratic movement. The spread of Marxism in the labour movement led to the formation of the first independent organisations and political parties of the proletariat, even though they still were relatively small Marxist circles in many countries. These organisations assimilated the ideas of scientific socialism and drew up their programmes, political line, and tactics with due account for the experience of the international working-class movement. The First International played an important role in awakening the consciousness of the Latin American workers.

The labour movement was only taking its first steps in the more backward countries of Central and South America. Here it was of a mutualist nature, even though the first Marxist circles had begun to appear in some areas. Workers confined themselves primarily to economic actions; politically, they followed bourgeois or radical petty-bourgeois parties.

The predominance of small-scale production, the great numbers of craftsmen, the relative youth of the labour movement, and the large proportion of immigrants from the Romanic countries of Southern Europe in it, on the one hand, and the absence of bourgeois-democratic civil freedoms in the majority of Latin American countries and the existence of tyrannical regimes which resorted to crude force to suppress workers' actions, on the other, made for the dissemination of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism in Latin America particularly in the early twentieth century. This turned the Latin American proletariat into the political reserve of petty-bourgeois radicals or even bourgeois liberals, and diverted it from the political struggle.

The Catholic Church exhibited a great interest in the labour movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in almost

every Latin American country. It formed its own workers' circles and trade unions with a reformist platform directly opposed to the programmes of the Socialists and anarchists.

The absence of a segment of the labour aristocracy in Latin America (a consequence of its dependence on the world capitalist system and the resultant weak development of its economy) weakened forces which strove to transform the socialist parties into reformist organisations. Owing to this, the Latin American Socialists, ideologically and in practice, while making certain concessions to the opportunists, generally favoured class and anti-imperialist struggles on the basic issues.

Despite its disunity and weak organisation, the Latin American proletariat won substantial concessions from the ruling classes in a tough struggle and forced them to reckon with its demands. A great achievement of the young working class and other progressive forces was the adoption in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, and Cuba of the law on the right to organise, as well as several other laws which improved the working conditions of hired workers.

The proletariat of Latin America took part in the fight against imperialist expansion, waging fierce class battles against foreign companies. However, neither socialist organisations nor trade unions advanced anti-imperialist programmes. The dissemination of the ideas of anarchism amidst the proletariat prevented it from realising its role in the anti-imperialist movement.

In the early twentieth century the working class on this continent was only taking its first steps towards organisation and the creative assimilation of international revolutionary experience; it was still unable to take charge of the struggle for the consolidation of political sovereignty, democracy, and social progress, against foreign imperialism and local oligarchies.

ASIA

The Development of Capitalism and the National Liberation Movement

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century feudal and, in a number of instances, even pre-feudal relations held complete sway in Asia. Even though the capitalist powers included the continent in the system of world capitalist ties after having established their colonial and semi-colonial rule here, they nonetheless did all in their power to preserve its political, economic and social backwardness. The ways and means of exploiting the colonies and dependencies, which had taken shape in the preceding period, were becoming more and more sophisticated.

Capitalist relations were nevertheless paving their way, albeit in a distorted form. The natural economy in agriculture and the traditional crafts were upset, the sphere of commodity-money relations expanded, and conditions created for the primitive accumulation of capital and the emergence of national enterprise. In other words, the social-class structures characteristic of feudalism were decaying. These processes became particularly intensified by metropolitan capital investments in the economies of the Asian countries which had risen drastically in the last third of the nineteenth century. The export of capital was becoming the main form of their colonial exploitation. Funds were channelled primarily into the laying of railways and also the construction of extracting enterprises and factories handling the primary processing of farm produce. What in the past was merely a subordinate element of the dominant commercial form of plundering the colonies was now becoming the chief method of their economic exploitation.

Describing this new method, Lenin stressed its dramatic consequences for the oppressed countries. He wrote that in the past the colonies were "drawn into *commodity* exchange but not into capitalist *production*. Imperialism changed this. Imperialism is, among other things, the export of *capital*. Capitalist production is being transplanted to the colonies at an ever increasing rate."¹

However, by transplanting capitalist production into the soil of the oppressed countries, the colonisers simultaneously deprived it of possibilities for normal development. First of all, they did everything in their power to support their allies and their bastion—local feudal classes and monarchistic regimes, and furnished them direct military and economic assistance in suppressing peasant and other anti-feudal movements. Local factory production was completely dependent upon deliveries of machinery and other equipment from metropolitan countries; the national bourgeoisie usually paid prices for foreign equipment which were several times higher than its actual cost. This was a tribute of sorts which the local bourgeoisie was forced to pay to the colonisers for the right to engage in business. Foreign capital thus held in its hands the levers restricting the growth of national industries.

Easily negotiating forcibly lowered tariff barriers, foreign manufactured goods filled the domestic markets of the oppressed countries. Moreover, these markets were partially served by enterprises built by foreigners. As a result, national industries from the very outset had to contend with fierce competition, which they often could not withstand due to a lack of state support.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 337.

Nonetheless, national industries developed, and a local bourgeoisie emerged, not to mention the hired workers who had appeared still earlier at enterprises run by foreign capital.

The national bourgeoisie, which had taken shape in colonial conditions and was therefore quite weak, could not carry out bourgeois transformations. To a certain extent it adapted to the colonial regime, but it simultaneously waged a struggle against it. Thus there arose bourgeois nationalism to replace feudal nationalism, which was gradually losing ground but not completely ousted.

The last third of the nineteenth century was indeed a period of the emergence of an essentially bourgeois national liberation movement, even though it was sometimes headed not by the local bourgeoisie but by representatives of the feudal intelligentsia and even by feudal rulers in certain quarters. The national bourgeoisie began to form its own political organisations. It came out against colonialism and feudal absolutism, for the elimination of everything which impeded economic and political development along the capitalist path. Such, for example, were the goals which the secret Society of New Ottomans, which headed the Turkish constitutional movement in the 1860s and 1870s, and later the organisation of Young Turks, set themselves.

A strong bourgeois-democratic movement emerged in the 1870s in India. Aiming to take part in the governing of the country, the national bourgeoisie initially united at provincial level, and in 1885 organised a nation-wide party—the Indian National Congress, which since that time led the liberation movement in the country. An important element of the new stage of the struggle against colonial rule which began after 1885 was the broad Swadeshi movement, aimed at the production and use of home manufactures and the boycott of foreign goods.

A graphic example of the liberation struggle under the banner of bourgeois nationalism was the Philippine Revolution against the Spanish colonisers (1896-1898). An armed uprising was staged by a secret bourgeois-democratic organisation—the Catipunan, which later became a mass-scale revolutionary association of peasants, the urban poor, the petty bourgeoisie, and intellectuals not of gentle birth. The revolution was marked by the proclamation of an independent republic (true, it did not last long) with a constitution which was highly democratic by the standards of the times, and by attempts to resolve the land question in favour of the peasants. The offshoot of this heroic national liberation saga was the revolutionary war of the Filipinos (1898-1901) against new colonisers—the American imperialists.

In the countries of Southeast Asia in the last third of the nineteenth century armed resistance to colonial aggression was mounted

by feudal states defending their independence. If their rulers operated in collusion with the colonisers, the resistance continued under the direction of popular leaders. An active guerrilla war continued for several decades against British invaders in Burma, French—in Vietnam, and Dutch—in Indonesia.

These decades also witnessed the steadily mounting struggle of the peasants and plebeian strata in the cities against foreign enslavers in China. The young national bourgeoisie stepped up its activities after the defeat in the war against Japan in 1895. Its reformational wing attempted to consolidate the country through a system of bourgeois reforms and to save it from the imminent threat of complete enslavement and division among powers. The revolutionary-democratic wing of the national bourgeoisie headed by Sun Yat-sen united in 1894 into the secret Alliance for the Rebirth of China (Xingzhonghui). Its leading members considered their main task to be the overthrow of the Manchu Qing dynasty and the proclamation of the republic. Like the reformers, they initially did not set out to fight imperialist penetration, attempting to neutralise the big powers or even draw them to their side. The national bourgeoisie was afraid of the people; even its most leftist elements hoped to obviate the need for a mass-scale uprising, staking solely on a small circle of conspirators.

The attempts of the reformers to carry out a number of important changes in 1898 through the young Emperor Guangxu, who supported them, ended in failure. Monarchistic reaction, headed by the dowager Empress Ci Xi, abolished the most important decrees on reforms; a number of the reformers were executed, and the Emperor arrested.

The masses—peasants, craftsmen, boatmen, stevedores, and small tradesmen, i.e., those who suffered most from the domination of foreign powers in China, set out in their own way to rid the country from the colonial yoke. The anti-missionary revolts which had taken place over a span of many years in Shandong, Zhili, and other provinces, developed into the powerful popular anti-imperialist uprising of 1899-1900, which engulfed the northern regions of the country. The rebels, headed by Yihetuan, a secret occult society, demanded the destruction and expulsion of "foreign devils" from the country, destroyed buildings belonging to foreigners, ruined foreign innovations—steam locomotives and carriages, railway tracks and telegraph poles—and broke machines. Frightened by the course of events, the feudal-monarchistic government initially supported the insurgents and even tried to direct their activity; however, when a 40,000-man army of eight powers smashed the opposition of the insurgents in August 1900 and invaded the capital, the Ci Xi government entered into negotiations with the imperialists and began a war against their former allies. It also suppressed the

bourgeois revolutionaries who had attempted to use the situation created by the popular uprising to overthrow the Manchu dynasty. The ruling feudal circles thus helped the imperialists conclude the process of transforming China into a semi-colony.

The national liberation struggle was therefore an important feature in the public life of the oppressed Asian countries in the last third of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This struggle took place now in the form of armed resistance of peoples defending the independence which they had not yet lost, now in the form of anti-feudal and anti-imperialist uprisings of peasants, craftsmen and the urban poor or reformational, constitutional and anti-monarchistic movements of the young national bourgeoisie in countries which had already been transformed into colonies or semi-colonies of the imperialists. The movement of wageworkers for their rights came to be part and parcel of the national liberation struggle.

The Asian countries can be divided into three groups according to the economic level which they had reached by the start of the twentieth century. The first comprised the relatively more advanced states—India, China, Turkey, and the Philippines. Here the establishment of capitalism and the formation of the proletariat made impressive progress. The second, most numerous group, which occupied an intermediate position, included Persia, Indonesia, Ceylon, Thailand, Indochina, Korea, Syria, and Burma. In the remaining countries—Nepal, Saudi Arabia, etc.—feudal and even pre-feudal relations held complete sway.

The degree and form of dependence of these countries on imperialism varied. India was the largest colony of British imperialism; Indonesia, Vietnam, Burma, Ceylon and some other nations were colonies as well. China, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Korea, etc., were semi-colonies, though sovereign states formally. In actuality, however, they were more or less dependent on imperialism.

Special Features of the Formation of the Working Class

The appearance of the first contingents of the proletariat in Asian colonies and dependencies was due to the exploitation of natural resources by the colonisers—the extraction of minerals and the creation of plantations (tea, rubber, etc.). Huge areas were given over to plantations in India, Ceylon, Indochina, Malaya, Indonesia, and Iraq. In 1901 a total of 697,000 workers were employed on tea plantations in India.¹ Large masses of them were concentrated on plantations in Ceylon. To process farm produce the colonisers built

¹ I. Khashimov, L. Shaposhnikova, *A History of the Labour Movement in India*, Tashkent, 1961, p. 24 (in Russian).

machine-based enterprises using hired labour in many Asian countries; the municipal services and consumer industry were also created. Their output was almost entirely exported. Capitalist machine production, but not at all the production of machines themselves, was transplanted into the soil of the oppressed Asian countries from without, this taking place in conditions when their own industrial development had not yet reached the factory stage and was at best at the manufactory stage.

In *China*, there were 101 foreign enterprises operating in 1894—shipyards, docks, silk-mills, gasworks, flour-mills, creameries, factories processing tea, bristles, etc. Approximately 40,000 workers were employed at them.¹ Chinese factories as such began emerging in the early 1860s; they were only government munitions plants which were built by high officials of the imperial court. There were 11 government enterprises in 1872; their number had risen to 19 by 1894. There were also ship-repair docks and shipyards, a large cloth-mill and a number of other enterprises.

Private enterprises began to appear in China in the late 1870s. However, the development of private enterprise was hampered by restrictions of all sorts which were imposed by the feudal-landlordist state and also caused by the dominant position of official, so-called bureaucratic capital. Between 1872 and 1893, of the total national capital investments in industry and transport (18.5 million yuan), official, or bureaucratic capital accounted for 15 million yuan.² The colonisers' rule created considerable impediments to private capital. Nonetheless, between 1872 and 1894, 75 private enterprises in the manufacturing industry were built, employing 27,000 hired workers in 1894.³ In 1900 there were upwards of 200 predominantly small-scale national enterprises of the capitalist type in the country. An additional 64 Chinese enterprises emerged from 1901 to 1904.⁴ The size of the proletariat grew accordingly. In 1904 China had approximately 200,000 factory workers, or some 250,000, counting transport and several other categories of workers.

Large detachments of the factory proletariat of *India* took shape first in the textile industry and later in other branches of the consumer industry, the priority growth of which constituted a typical feature of the economic development of all Asian colonial and dependent countries. In the main centres of India's textile industry—

¹ O. Ye. Nepomnin, *An Economic History of China (1864-1894)*, Moscow, 1974, p. 192; *A History of China Since Ancient Times*, Moscow, 1974, p. 214 (both in Russian).

² *Problems and Contradictions of the Industrial Development of the PRC*, Moscow, 1974, p. 16 (in Russian).

³ O. Ye. Nepomnin, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

⁴ *A Modern History of China*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 288, 465, 466 (in Russian).

Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur and Nagpur—there existed 27 cotton factories in 1874, and 144 in 1895. Indicatively, these were rather big enterprises, employing several hundred workers each in the 1890s. Still larger and technically better equipped factories were built in the jute industry. Even average-sized jute enterprises had workforces of approximately 3,000 each.

Although British capital controlled all of India's jute factories in 1898, the greater part of the cotton enterprises belonged to the national bourgeoisie. In other branches (such as flour, butter, rice polishing and cotton ginning, wool spinning and sugar) the British controlled three-fourths of all capital investments. The same proportion applied to the plantations.¹ In 1904 the country had a total of 1,449 factories, employing 632,636 workers.²

In the middle of the century British capital began intensively to develop the extracting industry. By the beginning of the twentieth century there already existed a number of branches of this industry in the country (mining of coal, oil, iron ore, manganese, etc.) in which 492,000 workers were employed.³

The first detachments of hired workers appeared in other countries as well. In *Malaya* a tin mining and a tin smelting industries took shape following the establishment of British rule. In 1885 Britain took 18,000 tons of tin from the country, and in 1904—almost 52,000 tons.⁴ At the beginning of the century Malaya began producing rubber (145 tons in 1905), soon becoming the main supplier of this product on the world market.⁵

In *Turkey*, there existed in the 1860s and 70s large textile manufacturing, as well as individual plant-type enterprises which mainly produced weapons and uniforms for the army; they sometimes had a workforce of up to 3,000.⁶ In addition, by 1870 there existed a cloth- and a paper-mill in Izmir, a hat factory and a plant producing olive oil in Istanbul, a china plant in Beykoz, a felt plant in Balikesir, factories producing silk yarn in Bursa, and a weaving factory in Ismail. In the 1880s foreign capital took hold of the country's entire extracting industry and the carpet weaving industry, and built large food processing enterprises, individual ship-building and

¹ A. A. Modern History of India, p. 336.

² I. Khashimov, L. Shaposhnikova, op. cit., pp. 10-13.

³ A. A. Benediktov, *The Development of the Capitalist Extracting Industry of India in the New Times (1870-1920)*, Dushanbe, 1963, pp. 477, 481 (in Russian).

⁴ *British Imperialism in Malaya*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, p. 38 (in Russian).

⁵ V. S. Rudnev, *Essays on the Recent History of Malaya. 1918-1957*, Moscow, 1959, p. 13 (in Russian).

⁶ Y. A. Petrosyan, *The Young Turk Movement (Second Half of the 19th-Beginning of the 20th Century)*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 35, 143 and elsewhere (in Russian).

ship-repair enterprises, and communal enterprises such as natural gas works, electric power stations and tram services. The number of hired workers increased, and small detachments of the industrial proletariat began to appear.

The first mechanised enterprises in *Burma* were built in the mid-nineteenth century—rice-polishing factories, saw-mills and small ship-building shops. By the 1890s the colonialists had expanded their exploitation of the country's natural resources—they had begun working ore reserves, drilling for oil, and constructing oil refineries and, somewhat later, cotton ginneries. Canals and new wharves and docks appeared.

In the late nineteenth century French imperialists began pouring industrial capital into *Vietnam*. Funds were invested in the working of coal and tin, the construction of textile, paper and rice-polishing factories, saw-mills and cement plants, and the laying of railways. The total number of Vietnamese industrial workers in 1905 reached 17,000 employed primarily at enterprises run by foreign capital. The number of workers at national enterprises was still very insignificant.

The expansion of industry demanded the creation of transport and communication means not only to ensure constant and reliable contact between ports and regions where raw materials were produced, but also to develop new territories and economic branches. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century intensive construction of railways and ports was begun in China, Indonesia, Korea, Burma, the Philippines, Turkey, Thailand, and several Arab countries. This led to the growth of the proletariat, as a substantial number of railway workers, dockers and stevedores became involved in it. In India, where railway construction started earlier, 5,000 miles of railway tracks had been laid by 1871, and upwards of 25,000 by 1901.¹ Some 281,000 persons were working on the railways in 1895. Approximately 2,500 kilometres of railway tracks appeared in Burma between 1877 and 1900.²

At the end of the century the imperialist powers began winning concessions from China for the construction of railways. Some 365 kilometres of railways were laid in the country between 1877 and 1894, and upwards of 3,000 kilometres between 1895 and 1904.³

¹ Romesh Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, Vol. 2, *In the Victorian Age 1837-1900*, Delhi, 1960, p. 412.

² A. S. Kaufman, *The Working Class and the National Liberation Movement in Burma*, Moscow, 1961, p. 21 (in Russian).

³ Estimations made on the basis of materials cited in the book, *A History of the Economic Development of China 1840-1948*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 170, 171, 175, 176 (in Russian).

Subsequently the construction of railways was carried on at an even more rapid pace. The railway proletariat grew as well.

Even though the statistics cited are incomplete, they provide grounds for stating that the last three decades of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century witnessed in the oppressed countries drawn into the world capitalist economy, primarily in India and China, further formation of the industrial proletariat (in the construction and exploitation of railways, but predominantly in the consumer, particularly the textile, industry). At the same time these countries had incomparably more numerous contingents of hired workers employed in crafts shops and manufactories.

Since foreign capital did everything in its power to hamper the development of heavy industry in colonial and dependent countries, such categories of workers as metallurgists, electrical engineers, etc. were absent or extremely small here. In China small numbers of them appeared only in the late nineteenth century at the government-owned foundry in Hanyang which employed 3,000 workers, and in India—in the early twentieth century at an even larger iron and steel works built by the Tata family. Thus, the development of heavy industry in Asian countries was, despite the opposition of the colonialists, begun not by foreign but by national capital—state (China) and private (India).

The countries of the intermediate group usually had small enterprises of the manufactory type. The situation in *Syria* and *Lebanon* was typical of these countries. As a result of the great influx of foreign industrial goods traditional crafts nosedived. A modicum of stability was preserved by branches which were connected with the production of household items; simple cooperation and nascent manufactories were particularly widespread. Small seasonal silk rolling and weaving enterprises of the manufactory type were built in Syria and Lebanon to supply the French textile industry with raw silk. In Lebanon, for example, the number of silk-weaving enterprises increased from 4 to 60 between 1861 and 1880; 5,200 workers were employed at them.

At the turn of the century French capitalists began financing the construction of communal and transport projects. Nonetheless there were almost no large industrial enterprises in Syria and Lebanon.

Small enterprises were also characteristic of *Thailand*. Rice-polishing factories with a workforce of over 400 were a big rarity.

Thus, the greater part of the army of hired labour in the most developed Asian countries and almost the entire one in the intermediate group of countries in the period under review consisted of workers of small manufactory and crafts enterprises. In terms of class consciousness, way of life and interests these workers stood much closer to craftsmen than to proletarians.

In the colonial and dependent Asian countries there existed a huge reserve army of labour which was replenished from impoverished peasants and craftsmen whose destitution was hastened considerably as a result of the incursion of foreign capital. Ejected from agricultural and craft production, these people concentrated in towns, comprising the so-called surplus population. Few of them managed to find jobs at factories or at small enterprises of the manufactory or craft type, others became worn out from inhuman working conditions on the plantations, still others sank to the level of paupers and lumpens, replenishing the ranks of coolies, rickshaw pullers, porters, boatmen and barge haulers.

One of the most important features of the formation of the industrial proletariat of the most developed Asian countries was its relatively high geographical, as well as production, *concentration*. This was caused by the penetration of foreign capital initially into a limited number of coastal cities (sea and river) and the construction of a certain number of large enterprises in them together with a mass of small enterprises. Specifically, in India the bulk of industrial workers were concentrated in several of the largest cities, located primarily on the seacoast—such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, as well as Ahmedabad, Kanpur and Nagpur. The Bombay residency, for example, had 69 per cent of all of the country's cotton factories as of 1903-04, and, consequently, the bulk of the workers in this industry. In China the largest centres of the concentration of the proletariat were Shanghai, the Wuhan region, Xianggang (Hongkong) and Guanzhou (Canton), as well as the capitals of the provinces of Hongan, Shandong and Zhili. In Turkey the majority of the enterprises were situated in Istanbul and on its outskirts. In the Philippines, the centre of the concentration of the proletariat was Manila, in Indonesia—the residencies of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaja. At the end of the nineteenth century Thailand's capital Bangkok, possessed the greater part of the country's industry and factory workers.

The proportion of the working class in the population of the overwhelming majority of the colonial and dependent countries was negligible: less than one per cent (only 0.5 per cent in China, for example); in Malaya and Ceylon alone was the percentage higher. However, the proportion of the proletariat in the areas of its concentration was relatively high. Thus, in Shanghai 300,000 workers, or 20 per cent of the city's population, were employed in industry. A high concentration of the industrial proletariat was also observed in India, Indonesia and several other countries. A total of 100,000 persons (an average of over 700 at a single enterprise) were employed at Bombay's textile factories in 1890.¹ In Indonesia 2,800 persons

¹ I. Khashimov, L. Shaposhnikova, op. cit., p. 10.

were working at two salt processing factories, and at several sugar refineries on Java—2,000 each.¹

The relatively high level of concentration of the proletariat facilitated the formation of collective forms of its struggle, raised its effectiveness and to a certain extent compensated for the generally small numbers of hired workers.

A characteristic feature of the emerging proletariat was the considerable *predominance of unskilled or semi-skilled workers* in it. This was due to the low technical and cultural level of the peasants and craftsmen, who were the main and ever growing source of the formation of the working class. Skilled work at enterprises run by foreign capital was done by workers who had come from metropolises or other capitalist states. Many of the European workers brought into the new environment the experience and developed forms of the labour movement, with which they raised the class and organisational level of the struggle of the local proletariat. However, the privileged status of the arrivals, who were in essence a labour aristocracy; their immeasurably higher wages than those of local workers; and their higher skills made them seem part and parcel of the metropolises to the Asian workers, thus hampering the development of proletarian unity.

A specific feature of the working class of the dependent and colonial countries of Asia was its great *ethnic and linguistic diversity*. The reason for this phenomenon lies in the particular unevenness of the development of these countries and even different parts of one and the same country.

Industrial centres brought into being by the incursion of foreign capital usually did not coincide with the old centres of handicrafts. For this reason not only were there initially few work hands in most new districts: there were often no workers possessing even marginal technical skills. Naturally, they had to be brought in from afar, even from other countries and areas where manufactory production had been developed earlier and where its ruination created reserves of labour with the required specialties. Thus, for Indian tea plantations situated in Assam and Maisur, the contracting of workers was carried out in Orissa, Bihar, the United Provinces and elsewhere. In Bengal, natives were in the minority at jute factories. In Ceylon and Burma the majority of workers were Indians, and in Malaya and Indonesia—Chinese. The working class of Thailand was formed almost exclusively from Chinese, who were forced by poverty and hunger to flee to a foreign land. In the 1890s 17,600 Chinese arrived in Siam annually.²

¹ A. B. Belenky, *The National Awakening of Indonesia*, Moscow, 1965, p. 31 (in Russian).

² N. V. Rebrikova, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

The ethnic diversity of the proletariat and its alienation from the local population slowed down the process of its class consolidation and thwarted its active participation in a country's public life.

Of course, there also existed regions where the process of the disintegration of the subsistence economy went far and where the working class consequently was formed mainly from the local population. In such cities as Madras, Bombay, Ahmedabad or Shanghai and Canton, the majority of workers were impoverished peasants from adjacent agricultural regions. A similar situation took shape in the Philippines and several other countries.

Living and Working Conditions

The condition of workers in Asian countries was determined by the rule of foreign capital and the wide spread of the most crude forms of oppression, which considerably exceeded all European "norms" of exploitation during the period of initial primitive accumulation of capital. The unparalleled degree of exploitation was also raised by the age-old and terrible poverty of the masses, the extremely low level of vital requirements, and the huge redundancy of labour. The colonial and semi-colonial regimes impeded the inception of political and trades organisations of the proletariat and its class awakening. The colonialists subjected the most class-conscious workers to severe repressions. For a long time the proletariat was incapable of overcoming the barriers which were placed in front of the labour movement, as well as socio-psychological impediments which had taken shape within the framework of the local society.

The local as well as foreign bourgeoisie increased the *length of the working day* to the utmost. For the former, this was one of the means through which it hoped to withstand the competition with the industries of developed capitalist countries. As a rule, the limits of the working day, particularly at small enterprises and on seasonal jobs, were determined by the daylight hours. With the appearance of electric lighting employers lengthened the working day even more—often to 14 and even 16 hours. Such was the case in India, for example. In Burma the working week was 80 hours long.¹ Everywhere workers were almost completely deprived of days of rest. Only two or three times a year, on important traditional holidays, were they given several days off.

In the colonial countries manpower was sold at a price significantly lower than the cost of its reproduction, which was extremely low here. Real wages of workers, even in large cities of the most developed

¹ U Ba Swe, *Workers' Struggles in Burma*, A People's Literature House Publication, Rangoon, 1951, p. 2.

Asian countries (Bombay, for instance), were much lower than half the subsistence level. This led to a high mortality rate and short lifespan. Thirty to forty per cent of the entire working class of China consisted of women.¹ Women's labour was even more widespread in Indonesia, where its proportion in industry reached two-thirds.² However, the mass drawing of women and children into the army of hired labour did not improve the situation of the workers in the least. A family was only able to eat once or twice a day, and usually the worst food. Nor did they have any money with which to buy clothes.

The most elementary labour safety means were absent at enterprises, which resulted in a multitude of fatal or incapacitating accidents. Job-related illnesses reached epidemic proportions, yet no preventive or treatment measures were taken.

The proletariat was experiencing an extreme housing shortage. The constant surplus of labour freed employers from concerning themselves with providing their employees with housing. It was only in rare instances, when it was necessary to keep skilled workers at their enterprises, that the capitalists engaged in housing construction. As a rule, several families or a large group of single workers lived in one room. Barracks-type dormitories, where overcrowding was compounded by a complete lack of sanitary and everyday conveniences, became widespread. In Bombay some 30 per cent of the workers were living in pathetic shacks which were more reminiscent of kennels than houses fit for human dwelling. Conglomerations of such shacks became a characteristic feature of suburbs and workers' districts in the industrial centres of Asian countries.

The condition of the proletariat was considerably worsened by the existence of a system of hiring through a contractor who acted as an intermediary between the worker and the employer. These contractors hired workers primarily from among their countrymen, often provided them with board and lodgings and settled all accounts for them with the employer; specifically, they received the workers' wages and subtracted a huge percentage (sometimes more than 50 per cent) from them for their "services". The same intermediaries usually performed the function of usurers as well, offering workers loans for trips to their new place of work and on other occasions. Many thus found themselves helplessly in arrears to their "benefactors".

The bulk of the workers continued to maintain stable economic ties with the countryside (factories often closed down during the farming season). Landing a job at a factory, a peasant or a craftsman viewed work there as a temporary occupation and after a certain

¹ *The First Chinese Labour Yearbook*, Peking, 1928, pp. 548-49 (in Chinese).

² Y. P. Zakaznikova, *The Working Class and the National Liberation Movement in Indonesia*, Moscow, 1971, p. 14 (in Russian).

period returned to the soil. As a result, there was an almost complete turnover of personnel every few years at many enterprises. This slowed down the formation of the proletariat as a class to the extreme and preserved the petty-bourgeois psychology, and age-old customs and prejudices.

The Development of the Labour Movement

The labour movement in the Asian countries took its first steps in the specific conditions of the colonial regime. Foreign rule left a profound imprint on the social psychology of the oppressed peoples and developed in them a sense of lowliness and the feeling that colonial oppression was unshakeable and any attempts to change the existing situation would be futile. It was to take a long time to overcome this psychological barrier. The social consciousness of the workers was largely limited to an understanding not of social, but only of traditional forms of community, such as nationality, religion, caste or tribe. Foreign rule intensified the sense of national community, which impeded the development of the class consciousness of the proletariat and its independent movement.

The labour movement was conceived simultaneously with the upsurge in the national liberation struggle and was part and parcel of it. It was particularly stepped up during the periods of the upswing of anti-imperialist actions. The fact that workers went on strike not only at enterprises of foreign capitalists but also at enterprises of the local bourgeoisie did not nullify the anti-imperialist content of their struggle. Even spontaneous, purely economic strikes staged by workers at enterprises owned by local businessmen objectively forced the national bourgeoisie to intensify its pressure on the colonialists and to step up the national liberation movement.

The first social conflicts between labour and capital were mirrored in the protests against fines and punishments, and against the arbitrariness of managers or owners. There were often cases when workers in desperation killed supervisors, and sometimes even the owner of their enterprise.

One of the early forms of struggle against employers was the signed petition. This form of protest became widespread in India, Turkey and several other countries. In handing out petitions, workers "groped" their way to the realisation that they had to band together to safeguard their interests though they hoped, that the owner was capable of understanding and admitting the just character of their demands. However, they gradually came to understand the futility of these hopes and began to shift from petition to a purely proletarian form of struggle—strikes.

In *Turkey*, the first major strike took place in late January 1872, when 500-600 workers of the Istanbul naval arsenal, protesting the long delay in the issuance of their wages and in an effort to bring their plight to the attention of the capital's public, walked off their jobs. In all, five strikes occurred in Turkey in 1872, including the ones staged by the telegraph workers of Beyoglu, railway workers of Izmir and on the Omerli-Yarimbuzurgaz line. Turkish proletarians are known to have participated in a mass demonstration in 1876 demanding a constitution. Between 1872 and 1880 inclusive, 21 strikes were staged in Turkey, while during the 1881-1906 period there were only four. This sharp decline in the strike movement was a result of the establishment of the despotic regime of Abdul-Hamid II, who ruthlessly suppressed any manifestation of revolutionary struggle and progressive thought.¹

In *India*, strikes began in the late 1870s. The first to rise in struggle were industrial proletarians—the textile workers of Bombay and the Bombay industrial district. In 1877 the textile workers of the Express Mills in Nagpur stopped work to protest a wage cut. Railway workers, dockers and municipal workers, particularly street-cleaners, who belonged to the caste of the untouchables, also staged several strikes. These, however, were single acts of purely economic, spontaneous struggle by small contingents of the proletariat, usually disunited and disorganised.

In the 1880s the struggle between labour and capital continued to develop in India. According to a report by the head factory inspector of Bombay, each factory averaged two strikes per year. Strikes took place not only in Bombay, but also in other industrial centres of the country, such as Madras, Calcutta, Kanpur and Ahmedabad.

In *China*, the years 1880 through 1895 witnessed nine strikes at major government-owned enterprises, such as the Jiangnan arsenal, the Hanyang iron and steel works and the Kaiping coal mines, as well as at two ship-building and ship-repair yards belonging to the British (Ye Song and Xiang Sheng).²

In the 1890s the number of economic strikes was constantly rising. Ten strikes were staged in the country in 1898 and 1899 alone.³ A popular anti-imperialist uprising was mounting in China at this time.

In the majority of cases the workers protested against wage cuts or demanded that their wages be raised. Of the 72 strikes which took place in China between 1895 and 1913, in 22 the workers demanded

¹ A. A. Guseinov, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

² *Materials on the History of Modern Industry in China*, Vol. I, Part 2, Peking, 1957, pp. 1248-1254 (in Chinese).

³ Ibid.

wage raises; in 16 they protested against various means through which it was lowered, and in the rest against a longer working day and worsened working conditions. There were often strikes staged in protest against the arbitrariness of owners or management, against their shabby treatment of workers. Even though these motives ceased being the mainsprings of the strike struggle at the turn of the century, they still remained quite significant. The centres of the strike struggle in China was Shanghai and other port cities, but strikes were also staged in such outlying regions as Sichuan or the northeast provinces. First place in the number of strikes was occupied by the textile industry, but the struggle was also waged by miners, steel-workers and municipal workers.

Although the majority of the earlier strikes were limited to one factory or even one shop floor, more extensive actions took place as early as the 1890s, when workers from several enterprises staged walkouts simultaneously and in a coordinated manner. In 1895 a strike took place which involved 8,000 workers from eight Bombay factories who protested against the latest pay cut. In June 1901 the employees of 20 Bombay factories rose up in struggle, demanding the preservation of their former wages. Two thousand staged a job action on the first day (apparently employees of one factory), and on the 11th day the number of strikers reached 20,000. This was the first strike of such dimensions not only in India, but in all of Asia. Having won partial satisfaction of their demands, the workers vigorously came out in defence of their leaders who were being persecuted by the management.

The largest number of strikes took place at factories and railroads belonging to foreign capitalists. Some of the actions were aimed directly against the colonial regime. Particularly noteworthy in this regard was the strike staged by 15,000 dock-workers and railwaymen, as well as by other groups of the working population of Bombay in 1898 against severe anti-plague measures elaborated by the colonial administration, which in effect only served to spread plague. The colonialists were forced to make concessions.

The anti-imperialist tinge of the struggle of the Chinese proletariat and at the same time its low level were distinctly manifested at the turn of the century in a series of essentially Luddite actions, the so-called *da shangs*, which were staged primarily at foreign-owned enterprises. The movement clearly demonstrated its proximity to the unique forms of struggle used by the insurgents in 1899 and 1900. Workers destroyed machines, equipment and even factories themselves. Such strikes took place in 1898 at mines in Anhui Province, and in 1905, at the Pingxiang mines, where workers destroyed not only equipment but also the living quarters of foreign engineers, and at a Japanese-owned textile factory in Yanshupu and other places.

Instances when strikes developed into spontaneous disturbances ending in the destruction of factory equipment and the beating up of particularly hateful members of the administration took place in the early twentieth century in Vietnam as well. *Da shang*-type actions simultaneously expressed the protest of former craftsmen against technical innovations recently brought in from the West which deprived them of their previous economic independence.

In a bid to break the persistence of the strikers, owners and the authorities resorted to armed reprisals. Thus, in 1896, during a strike at the Negapatam shops of the South Indian Railway the police opened fire on the workers.

The growth of the strike struggle in India also manifested itself in several job actions by women and even children. Thus, in 1894 the women employees at a cotton factory in Bombay declared a strike, demanding the restoration of their former pay scale. The women did not give in for a long time, although the men who tried to support them returned to their jobs and 29 women were arrested. In 1889 boys employed at the spinning shop of the Carnatic factory in Madras went on a several-day-long strike, demanding a pay hike, a regular day off and a longer lunch break.

The first significant strike actions in the Philippines began in 1898, and they started growing in scope in the 1900s. The uniqueness of the struggle of the Philippine proletariat lay in the fact that the strike movement was preceded by the formation of labour organisations. The organised labour movement arose earlier here than in other Asian countries with a more developed proletariat, which was probably due to Spanish influence.

Actions by workers also took place in several countries of the intermediary group. A major strike by Chinese workers began in 1889 at three rice-polishing factories in Bangkok, Thailand. It ended in barricade fighting which lasted 36 hours. Despite the ruthless reprisals against the strikers (900 persons were placed on trial before a special tribunal), a new strike erupted there the following year.

The first strike in Ceylon occurred in January 1893 at a British printshop. It lasted six days and ended in defeat for the workers. In 1898 carriers in the port of Colombo staged a walkout in protest against wage cuts, and they were followed a year later by printers from the newspaper *Times of Ceylon*.

The turn of the century witnessed the start of worker disturbances in Korea. They engulfed the broad masses in a number of instances. In 1900, 2,000 workers at the mines in the district of Chuk Sang rose up against their Japanese employers. In 1898 and 1902 disturbances took place among ditch-diggers employed in the construction of railways. In March 1900 January 1901 and in 1903, stevedores and

dockers in the port of Mok Pkho went on strike. In the latter instance Japanese soldiers were sent in to suppress the strikers. The actions were of a spontaneous nature and were directed against foreign employers, Japanese in particular.

In some countries workers began organising rallies and demonstrations. Three huge worker rallies are known to have occurred in Bombay—in 1884, 1889 and 1890. One of the first strikes in Vietnam, which erupted in 1900 at the On Lau quarries, was accompanied by a mass rally of Vietnamese and Chinese workers. The French colonial authorities dispersed the meeting and arrested 23 persons. Seven people were executed.

The initial phase of the strike struggle of the proletariat had features which were conditioned by the specifics of the formation and structure of the proletariat. The ethnic diversity of the working class and the national discord instigated by the bourgeoisie often led to the frustration of joint strike actions. During a strike in 1893 at a jute factory in Hour the Hindus went back to work even though the Muslims continued to strike. In China there were many instances when natives of one province began a strike, while those of another refused to support them. This was the case, for example, in 1896 at the Hanyang arsenal, where carpenters from Guanzhou alone staged a walkout.

Strikes were not planned in advance and were disorganised. Many of them began with a general action by the proletarians, and later became partial ones. Strike actions were of a predominantly defensive nature and for this reason alone ended in defeat for the workers in the majority of cases. The beginning of a regular strike movement can be dated to the last decade of the nineteenth century for India, and as late as the last five years of the century for China.

Nevertheless, the spontaneous and local outbursts of desperation, which the majority of the strikes at that time actually were, marked the start of the class struggle of the proletariat. Joint work at enterprises and especially participation in mass actions gradually transformed workers, developing elements of the proletarian psychology in them and bringing them closer to the realisation that unity and organisation were imperative for the defence of their demands. The Indian researcher G. K. Sharma notes that as early as the late nineteenth century the workers came to see the efficacy of joint action, even though there were still no trade unions.¹

In the process of the formation of the proletariat initial forms of its organisation began to take shape as well. In the beginning workers' associations emerged on the basis of religion, nationality, caste, or

¹ G. K. Sharma, *Labour Movement in India. (Its Past and Present)*, University Publishers, Jullundur, Delhi, Ambala, 1963, p. 64.

craft. They assisted in job placement, furnished material aid in particularly difficult situations, and engaged in educational work.

In the India of those times not a single person could exist outside his caste, for a break with caste, and, consequently, blood ties, made him a social outcast. A worker who was not well off was even less apt to do this, since one of the functions of the caste was mutual aid. For this reason, if workers who severed ties with the countryside were eventually forced to break with their ancestral caste, they did so "only if they entered another caste which stood no lower on the social ladder than the previous one".¹ Proletarians at one enterprise often formed a new caste.

In China, the first associations which also included workers were crafts corporations, urban associations of people from the same part of the country, fraternities and secret societies. These forms of association had existed for two centuries. Handicraft corporations were set up for philanthropic purposes and based on the trade, religious and territorial community not only of workers, but also apprentices, as well as the artisan-employers. All the members of a corporation worshipped some particular saint, the patron and founder of the given craft. Formally everyone was equal here, but elective posts were occupied only by employers. Given this composition there often arose conflicts within corporations.

Similar organisations—guilds—existed in the 1870s in the Philippines, where they had been created under the influence and with the participation of Spanish syndicalists. These guilds incorporated craftsmen (employers), manufactory workers and other working people according to trade. Their main task was to arrange mutual material aid for their members.

Associations of people from the same part of the country were widespread in big Chinese cities and, unlike the corporations, they united people of various social strata—rich traders, skilled craftsmen, industrial workers, numerous semi-proletarians (mainly coolies) and lumpen-proletarians purely according to the territorial principle. Disposing of considerable material resources, these associations furnished their members financial assistance in the event of dire need, provided protection for goods, helped in job placement, settled conflicts (including strikes), etc. These were essentially bourgeois organisations; however, being a significant social force, they enjoyed great influence among the workers, who often turned to them for help.

In large Chinese cities there were many so-called fraternities, or fraternal organisations, which incorporated, also on a regional basis, exclusively semi-proletarian urban strata—coolies, porters, the

¹ A. A. Benediktov, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

unemployed, as well as the partially unemployed, who subsisted on chance earnings. Such fraternities, which usually consisted of several dozen or several hundred people, saw their main task to lie in helping their members to survive in the big and hostile city. However, even these fraternities were not class organisations of the proletariat.

There also existed traditional secret societies which had played an appreciable role in Chinese history. They were highly popular among a portion of skilled craftsmen and industrial workers who were closely bound with those craftsmen by joint work but particularly among the urban lumpen-proletariat. Chinese workers emigrating to other countries, as Thailand and Malaya, brought similar forms of organisation there as well.

Of course, all these corporations, guilds, regional associations and fraternities were intended to fix the traditional way of thinking in the consciousness of their members and deepen the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie which was growing stronger. Yet the presence of proletarians in such organisations reflected the former's spontaneous urge for unification. And in this sense the workers' participation in them was a necessary step on their path from lower forms of association to higher ones.

At the same time there began to appear more modern forms of the organisation of workers, which showed that the idea of the unification of the proletariat on a class basis was paving a way for itself, albeit slowly. These organisations were set up by the advanced segment of the national intelligentsia. The first organisation to incorporate primarily workers was the Bombay Mill-Hands Association. It was founded in 1884 by Narayan Meghajee Lokhanday, an employee at Great Eastern Mill in Bombay. He was a man of moderate liberal views who published a philanthropically-oriented newspaper entitled *Dinbandhu* (Friend of the Poor). The task of the association, its head claimed, was the safeguarding of the well-being and interests of those connected with industrial production in the city, and consequently, not only industrial workers. Extremely amorphous, it did not have a membership list or a treasury; it was not a trade union and did not take part in the organisation of strikes. It is even possible that the association was set up to prompt the workers to refrain from staging strikes and use more moderate forms of struggle. Its practical work, however, helped to unite workers irrespective of their ethnic and caste affiliation in pressing specific demands and thus facilitated their joint actions.

Every once in a while the association convened huge meetings at which the workers discussed their economic demands. The first such meeting, convened on September 16, 1884, drew 4,000 persons. A resolution was drawn up which was then sent to a factory commission appointed by the colonial administration for investigating the

condition of the workers. The work of the association and the views of its founder mirrored the sentiments of progressive public and its interest in the labour issue.

In October 1889, amidst the growth of the strike movement, the association called a meeting of Bombay workers, at which a petition to the Viceroy of British India was adopted. The workers requested: one day off per week, a half-hour lunch break, a working day beginning at 6:30 a.m. and ending at sunset, the issuance of wages no later than the 15th of each month, assistance to workers seriously injured on the job, and payments to disabled workers. This was no longer an "appeal to the kindness of employers", but concrete, albeit minimal, demands showing the workers' desire to uphold their interests before the administration. Subsequently the leaders of the Bombay Association proposed setting up trade unions on the British model, which was a new phenomenon in the Indian labour movement.

In 1895 in the Turkish capital the employees of the Tophane state munitions factory formed the first illegal Turkish labour organisation the Ottoman Workers' Society. While seeking to improve the material condition of its members, the society simultaneously sought to attain political goals, such as the liberation of the country from foreign domination and the overthrow of the sultan regime. The society was dissolved within a year, and its leaders sentenced to hard labour for a period of seven to nine years.

In Thailand, the first trade union appeared in 1897, uniting tramway workers of Bangkok. Even more modern forms of workers' associations appeared in the Philippines. The Union of Philippine Printers was formed in late 1901. It was headed by Ermenegildo Cruz, who came from the urban poor; he worked as a typesetter and later as a proofreader. The union adopted the Marxist slogan "The emancipation of the workers is a task of the workers themselves" as its motto.¹

Isavelo de los Reyes, a publicist expelled from the country by the Spanish colonialists, is considered the founder of the Philippine trade unions. He returned in 1901 and in February 1902 he founded the Democratic Workers' Union of the Philippines, which incorporated 14 labour guilds and the Printers' Union. The programme documents of the organisation stressed the necessity to use peaceful means in pushing for wage increments and improved working conditions, and even contained an appeal for harmony between labour and capital. At the same time the programme definitely reflected the influence of the American proletarian movement, having advanced a demand for an eight-hour working day and the involvement of all workers into

¹ G. I. Levinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

a single trade union. Pride of place was relegated to national demands (Philippine independence) and general-democratic ones (against landowners).

In 1902 the union sent petitions to a number of employers in the tobacco and printing industries demanding wage hikes. The employers refused to enter into negotiations. Then the workers resorted to strikes and won their wage increase. A new strike began on August 15, 1902 under the union's leadership: employees at a cigar factory demanded that the pay scale be reconsidered. The struggle lasted for six weeks, but it did not end in victory for the workers. During the strike Union President Reyes was arrested, convicted and deported. Dominador Gómez, known for his consistent struggle for the workers' interests, became Union President. In 1903 the union headed an even bigger strike, this time at an American electric power station in Manila. The workers were defeated, since they were unable to coordinate their actions, which enabled the management to use strike-breakers, who worked under police protection. In 1903 the union organised a May Day demonstration in which nearly 100,000 persons participated. The demonstration proceeded under the slogans "Down with the American invaders!", "We demand freedom!" and "We demand an eight-hour working day!" The demonstrators' attempt to break into the Governor-General's palace was repulsed by American troops. Gómez was sentenced to four years at hard labour, and the Philippines' first trade-union association soon disintegrated. However, the repressions did not halt the development of the organised labour movement. The followers of Reyes and Gómez later formed new labour unions.

The national and religious strife which existed among the workers of Asian countries often led to the unification of workers of one nationality or religion only. Thus, the early 1900s saw the formation in Bombay of the Workers' Union, which incorporated only Marathi proletarians who constituted three-fourths of the city's industrial workers. In Calcutta, where Hindus and Muslims were employed in industry, the Muslim Association of Workers was organised in 1895, and the Hindus announced the formation of the Hindu Workers' Union. The Muslim association united thousands of workers; it called meetings at which their needs and demands were discussed, furnished material aid in case of sickness, and assisted people in finding jobs.

On the whole, the proletariat of the most developed and medium-developed countries of oppressed Asia which was taking shape at the turn of the century began to demonstrate its mounting force and an urgent desire to unite and to create its own labour organisations. It began to take part in the national liberation struggle, even though it did not yet act within it as an independent force.

AFRICA

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the majority of African countries were at various stages of pre-capitalist relations. The inclusion of Africa into the orbit of the world capitalist economy gave an impetus to the development of new social forces. The process began of the formation of the working class, which overtook the formation of the national bourgeoisie, since under the colonial regime the incipient industry proved in effect to be completely in the hands of foreign capitalists. It was only in Egypt that a national proletariat took shape relatively intensively. In the enslaved Maghreb countries and in the south of Africa the bulk of steady workers were usually European immigrants. The local proletariat was only incipient and had still not separated from small commodity producers—peasants and artisans. Despite the substantial influence which organisations of European proletarians were exerting on African workers and their consciousness and activity, the first actions by African workers assumed proletarian forms only sporadically and spontaneously. Basically, however, these actions became lost within the incipient popular anti-colonial movement, which was led primarily by the traditional élite. In Tropical Africa the working class was still totally non-existent. There the colonialists, using methods of extra-economic coercion, were only creating conditions for the appearance of an army of hired workers.

The formation of the African proletariat and the development of the labour movement on this continent should be examined with a view to distinctive historical features of its three major regions.

Egypt and the Maghreb Countries

In the late nineteenth century the drawing of the countries of Northern Africa into the mainstream of capitalist development started off their transformation into agrarian and raw-material appendages of metropolises. The penetration of capitalism into Africa created the prerequisites for the formation of a local proletariat.

Although forced labour or labour conscription for the benefit of the colonialists were not totally widespread in Northern Africa, nonetheless, even in Egypt, which was at a higher level of socio-economic development, tens of thousands of peasants were engaged in forced labour. This diverted the peasants from working on their own farms and often led them to ruination. According to watered down official statistics, between 1888 and 1898 alone, from 11,000 to 84,000 peasants were annually recruited for forced labour.¹ In a bid to accelerate the creation of an army of hired labour, foreign

¹ Ch. Roux, *La production du coton en Egypte*, Paris, 1908, p. 239.

capital began to make wider use of *indirect coercion*; this was achieved by the expropriation of peasant lands which were given over to European immigrants and foreign companies. This policy was pursued particularly vigorously by France in Algeria and Tunisia, and by Britain in Egypt.

In the Maghreb countries French capitalists seized lands, driving peasants off them through the so-called immatriculation system. Under this system, the right to own land was recognised solely upon presentation of official papers. If no such papers were presented, the land was considered as belonging to no one and expropriated. Most peasants did not have the requisite papers and lost their land. The French colonialists introduced such a system in Algeria by as far back as decrees of 1844 and 1846. In 1873 and 1887 they issued new laws dissolving the village commune and accelerating the deprivation of the peasantry of its land. Now all ancestral and communal lands were subject to compulsory division and became the private property of commune members. The latter soon fell under the power of moneylenders and rich European colonists who bought up plots for a song.

In Tunisia the immatriculation system was introduced in 1885, and it was later supplemented by a series of intricate rules on the Algerian model, which undermined public land use and facilitated the chasing of peasant tillers off the land. There existed other ways of seizing peasants' lands as well. By decrees on the demarcation of forest land, for example, all forests were declared state property. Often included in the category of forests were territories on which just a few trees stood.

A similar fate befell nomadic livestock-breeders, who constituted a substantial portion of the rural population of the Maghreb countries. Through special circulars (in Algeria in 1893 and Tunisia in 1892 and 1896) European invaders took possession of arable lands on plateaux and untilled pasture areas, declaring them no man's land. Destroying the traditional practices of the development of extensive livestock breeding, the French colonialists stimulated the process of social stratification among the nomads. This resulted in a growth in the number of the impoverished, whom need forced to enlist in the army or go to work for the European colonists. The nomads' transition to a sedentary way of life was progressing ever more extensively. ❧❧

The *taxation system* was an important means of dissolving the peasant class in the Maghreb countries and a way of enriching the colonialists. In Egypt, for example, the land tax reached 30-40 per cent of the peasant's net income. Sometimes the tax for poor peasants was even higher than for big landowners. Thus, for one feddan of unproductive, poorly irrigated land, which usually belonged to the

peasant, the latter paid 16 shillings. Yet for one feddan of fertile land, where the harvest was five times as great as that in the former case, and which usually belonged to a landlord, the tax was only four shillings.¹ The tax burden caused the peasants to fall into arrears to moneylenders, which also often ended in the loss of their plots.

All this led to the mass impoverishment of peasants and to the formation of a labour market. However, far from all the peasants who had lost their land could find jobs at enterprises run by foreign or local capitalists. A large portion of them became lumpens, joining the army of "redundant" population.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century also witnessed the ruination of craftsmen in the Maghreb countries. They could not withstand the competition with foreign factory-type industry. Thus, during the first 25 years of the existence of the protectorate in Tunisia (1881-1905) the number of craftsmen in the capital decreased 3.5 times,² even though the population continued to grow. Of the 35 leather-dressing shops operating here in the late 1870s and early 1880s, only ten remained open by 1900. During the same period the number of craftsmen in a piece-rate shop dropped from 500 to 150. A tragic fate befell Egyptian spinners, whose skills had been world famous. By the end of the nineteenth century the spinning industry in Egypt was almost fully liquidated, which was a boon for British textile magnates.

The penetration of foreign capital into the economies of the North African countries was accompanied by the development mainly of the extracting industry and the emergence of railway, repair and other shops, municipal services, etc. This resulted in the growth of the local proletariat, but its numbers were still rather small, and it consisted predominantly of unskilled workers. Only former craftsmen who possessed specific skills were being used to execute more or less skilled operations. Usually, however, employers imported workers from the metropolises to do this work.

In Tunisia the proletariat began taking shape in the early twentieth century. In Algeria this process had started back in the mid-nineteenth century, and by 1904 there were some 100,000 workers in the country, the vast majority of whom were Europeans.

By the turn of the century the Egyptian proletariat had surpassed the working class of the Maghreb countries both quantitatively and in the level of its class consciousness. In 1873 the country had only 20,000 industrial workers, whereas in the 1900s their number increased several times over. This was due to the fact that the British

¹ W. Willicocks, *Sixty Years in East*, London, 1935, p. 157.

² V. B. Lutsky, op. cit., p. 250.

capitalists brought raw materials to Egypt in order to process it with the cheap labour of local workers. In some repair shops in Tanga, Bulaq and Shubra, the number of workers reached 500. Fairly substantial contingents of local proletarians were formed in the food (particularly sugar) industry. Even the metalworking industry had nearly 30,000 workers; nearly 5,000 were employed in railway shops. However, even in Egypt, let alone the Maghreb countries, the local proletariat remained in the grips of traditional prejudices, religious fanaticism and ignorance for a long time to come.

Typical of the proletariat of the Maghreb countries from the very outset was the dichotomy between immigrants and local workers. The first contingents of proletarians consisted of Europeans who possessed industrial skills and handled the most complicated jobs. There existed a certain alienation between Europeans and local proletarians. The colonialists did everything they could to deepen it, providing European workers certain small privileges and benefits. This policy hampered the unification of the proletariat and held back the development of its class consciousness. Nevertheless, the emergent Maghreb proletariat could not but experience the favourable influence of the European workers, many of whom had been active participants in the revolutionary battles of 1848-49 and subsequent years, the very reason for which they had been exiled to Africa.

The bulk of the immigrant workers, with the exception of a comparatively small portion working at industrial enterprises, were engaged in the construction of roads, ports and public utilities. Working conditions were difficult; the insufficient and poor food led to illnesses; many fell victim to epidemics. The exiles were even worse off. They had to do the most laborious jobs, and they were not granted any allowances whatsoever. Exiled Italians, Spaniards and Maltese were subjected to particularly ruthless exploitation.¹

Under the colonial and semi-colonial regimes even immigrants were forced to sell their labour for much less than its real worth.² The labour of local workers was reimbursed for even less, and their wages, to a greater degree than those of the immigrants, depended on the overall situation on the labour market. In Egypt's Sharkiz Province, the area with the densest agrarian overpopulation, the wages of an Arab navvy in 1903 amounted to 2.5 piasters per day, while the national average was 4.5 piasters, and six piasters in Cairo.³

¹ Robert Tinthoin, *Colonisation et évolution des genres de vie dans la région ouest d'Oran de 1830 à 1885*, Oran, 1945, p. 295.

² Comité de travaux historiques scientifiques. *Section d'histoire moderne et contemporaine. Actes du soixante-dix-neuvième congrès national des sociétés savantes*, Alger, 1954, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1955, p. 350.

³ L. A. Friedman, *The Capitalist Development of Egypt (1882-1939)*, Moscow, 1963, p. 315 (in Russian).

The condition of local workers was worsened by the numerous deductions, which reached 13 per cent of their earnings.¹ Besides, an Arab worker often had to give part of his wages to the middleman who had landed him the job. The miserly wages for the 15-hour work day impelled many proletarians to send their wives and children to work.

The first steps made by the proletarian movement of the Maghreb countries were due to French and other workers of European extraction living there. Admittedly, they usually acted in isolation. However, in a number of instances even at the earliest phase of the movement (the 1870s) they were joined by separate groups of the local proletariat, a fact which was revealed during the Algerian events of 1870-71.

The news of the overthrow of the empire and the proclamation of a republic in France generated an immediate reaction on the part of French petty-bourgeois democratic republicans resident in Algeria, most of whom had been exiled there by the Bonapartist regime. In September 1870 there emerged the Republican Association of Algeria—a political bloc of revolutionary workers and petty-bourgeois democrats. It included not only Frenchmen, but also workers of other European nationalities and Arabs. The association had branches in all towns and set up elective municipalities, or communes. It believed that Algeria must become a federation of communes.

This was followed by the emergence of republican defence committees and the formation of a national guard with an elective command. In October 1870 the immigrant workers staged an uprising together with the Arab poor of Algiers. They expelled the authorities placed by the Second Empire and arrested many officials and army officers. The Republican Association nominated its representatives to the new government bodies—urban defence committees. At its insistence, Algerian Defence Committee Chairman Romouald Vuillermoz was proclaimed Provisional Extraordinary Commissioner of the country. However, power was taken over not by workers but by petty-bourgeois democrats who occupied leading posts in the association.

The petty-bourgeois democrats were afraid of the activity of the popular masses, particularly of a possible upsurge in the liberation struggle of the Arab population. For this reason they searched for ways of reaching accord with local reaction and the national defence government in Paris. Vuillermoz soon handed the reins of power over to Charles du Bouzet, appointed Extraordinary Commissioner of Algeria by the French government, a man who acted in the interests of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The Republican Association continued to exist, giving support to the French people in their resistance to the Prussian invaders.

¹ *Annuaire statistique d'Egypte 1914*, p. 380.

Under the influence of the Paris Commune, the revolutionary movement among the immigrant workers was invigorated anew in Algeria. In towns Republican Association-led demonstrations were held in support of the undertakings of the Commune and in protest against the Versaillesists, and a struggle was mounted to create a revolutionary government of the Paris Commune type in Algeria. According to Algiers prefect Helo, whose overthrow the Algerian workers were demanding, "there existed a complete criminal single-mindedness between the communalist movement in Algiers and the same kind of movement in Marseilles, Lyons and Paris. All these centres were in contact with one another".¹

Reaction was leery of a general uprising, i.e., a joint action by foreign workers and the local population. The immigrant workers did not take part in any action, however. They were mainly inhibited by the stand of the Republican Association which refused to support the national liberation uprising of the Arabs and Kabyls led by Muhammed Mokrani which began in mid-March 1871. This objectively helped the Versaillesists. L. Guesdon, the new Governor-General, disbanded the national guard, dissolved the municipalities of Algiers and other cities, and declared a state of siege in the capital. Later, after receiving reinforcements from France, he suppressed the uprising of the Arabs and Kabyls.

The defeat of the communalist labour and national liberation movements in Algeria was the result of the tragic disunity and even hostility between these two revolutionary trends, which were fighting the same enemy. It is an indicative fact that both the Algerian insurgents and the Paris communards were to suffer the same fate. "The Paris communards, sentenced to hard labour abroad, met up with Kabyls in insurgents in Nouméa.... Both could thus see for themselves that they had the same enemies and that consequently they should be comrades-in-arms."²

The sway of reaction in the country greatly accelerated the disintegration of the Republican Association caused by its class heterogeneity, its domination by petty-bourgeois democrats and its leadership's refusal to support the Algerian national liberation movement.

In Egypt, the British invaders ruthlessly suppressed patriotically-minded army officers led by Colonel Arabi (1881). Relying on the support of soldiers and peasants, the insurgents advanced the slogan "Egypt for Egyptians"; however, despite a number of impressive victories, they were eventually defeated. In 1881 a French punitive expedition repressed Tunisians who had rebelled against the coun-

¹ *The Paris Commune of 1871*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1961, p. 171 (in Russian).

² Jacques Duclos, *À l'assaut du ciel. La commune de Paris annonciatrice, d'un monde nouveau*, Éditions sociales, Paris, 1961, p. 296.

try's being declared a French protectorate. All of this enabled the colonialists to further the enslavement of the North African countries.

The 1890s saw attempts to form trade unions in North African countries. These associations were few in number, however. Thus, in Constantine, Algeria, French workers comprised only five per cent of the membership of the Working People's Union and the Society of Free Thought, and there were no Muslims at all in them.¹ In Tunisia trade unions emerged in 1894, while the first strikes took place only in 1900, drawing European workers alone.

The turn of the century witnessed the beginning of a trend towards the overcoming of alienation between immigrant workers and local proletarians. In Egypt a joint strike of European and Arab workers was staged in 1899. They demanded wage increments and a shorter working day, and they received all that. The Amalgamated Union of Tobacco Workers was formed during the strike, incorporating both European and Arab workers. The subsequent years were marked by growing activity among Egyptian proletarians of various nationalities. 1903 was a milestone year, when workers of many enterprises staged simultaneous strikes. In Tunisia Muslim workers participated for the first time in a May Day rally of French workers in 1904.

Southern Africa

By the start of the 1870s the British colonies of Cape and Natal existed in southern Africa alongside the Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State; Basutoland had been declared a British protectorate. The establishment of British rule in southern Africa was completed during the Anglo-Boer War. The British invaders sought to adapt the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation of Africans—slavery and serfdom—used by the Boers, to the needs of the capitalist production being implanted in southern Africa. Hired labour was utilised on European farms, at ports and in the construction of railways as early as the 1870s, albeit on a limited scale. However, a particularly powerful impetus was given to the development of capitalism by the discovery in southern Africa in the 1870s and 1880s of the world's largest deposits of diamonds and gold, which caused an influx of immigrants from Europe, primarily workers and craftsmen of Anglo-Saxon extraction.

In southern Africa towns, such as Johannesburg and Kimberley, began to grow rapidly, railways were laid, the extraction of minerals, coal in particular, was expanded, and agriculture was stepped up. All this increased the demand for hired labour, which could not be satisfied through the immigration of workers. The colonial authorities

¹ *Comité de travaux historiques...*, p. 350.

sought to provide the emergent capitalist economy with local manpower resources. A wide network of hiring offices was set up. The recruiting agent was paid one pound sterling for each African contracted for a period of three months.

These hiring methods proved insufficient, however. A report of a government commission set up to study the hired labour problem in southern Africa recommended attacking the entire native social system for the purpose of changing or destroying it.¹ One effective means was the levying of exorbitant taxes; the tax of 1894 was particularly oppressive. As a result, tens of thousands of peasants thronged to the country's mines to earn money to pay the taxes. At the Kimberley diamond mines, for example, nearly 30,000 Africans were hired annually for a number of years. Proletarianisation among the native inhabitants of southern Africa developed more rapidly than elsewhere in Africa. By the start of the Anglo-Boer War, the number of African workers employed in gold mining had reached 98,000 (14,000 in 1890).² A multi-national, multi-racial working class was taking shape in southern Africa.

The emergent proletariat was subjected to ruthless exploitation. In 1880 a law on masters and servants went into effect in Transvaal (similar laws were enforced in Natal as early as 1850 and the Orange Free State—in 1904), under which non-white workers were severely punished and even physically tortured for violation of the term of the contract, careless work, or disrespect for the employer or his representatives. In order to intensify control over Africans, a law on permits was enacted in 1899; for failure to produce a permit an African was fined ten pounds or given twenty whip lashes. Forced labour continued to exist. In the colony of Cape alone, during the Anglo-Boer War, some 7,000 Africans worked without remuneration on the construction of fortifications and warehouses and the repair of railroad beds.³

The colonialists made particularly wide use of the practice of contracting Africans to work at their enterprises for scanty wages. The contracted African workers were living in extremely squalid conditions. During the period of the contract, which officially lasted from four to six months, but frequently stretched over a longer time, local workers were quartered in compounds which they were forbid-

¹ M. I. Braginsky, *The Formation of the African Proletariat*, Moscow, 1974, p. 48 (in Russian).

² D. Hobart Houghton, Jenifer Dagut, *Source Material on the South African Economy: 1860-1970*, Vol. 2, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 29, 31; Francis Wilson, *Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911-1969*, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 4.

³ I. A. Nikitina, *The Seizure of the Boer Republics by Britain (1899-1902)*, Moscow, 1970, p. 82 (in Russian).

den to leave. The compounds were usually enclosed by wire or iron fences. The workers lived twenty or more to a room. The overcrowding and lack of sanitary facilities led to epidemics. Dysentery was particularly widespread. Another bane was job-related diseases, the leader among which was tuberculosis. According to official, and usually watered down, statistics, in 1882, of every 10,000 Africans to catch these diseases, 639 died.¹ According to the testimony of John Burns, an influential British MP, the death rate among Africans in compounds in the early 1900s reached from 40 to 70 per 1,000.² The pay scale for natives, who usually did dangerous and hard work (usually underground), was much lower than that for whites. For example, in 1891 the monthly wages of an African in the colony of Natal averaged 2 pounds 2 shillings, while the white worker received 5 pounds 13 shillings.³ Due to labour shortage the wages of Africans increased somewhat in subsequent years (to 4 pounds per month). However, in 1897 the worried mine owners won the passage of a maximum wages laws, which led to another reduction in wages.

The shortage of local workers was covered by the Asians (mainly Indians), who were brought in in large numbers and usually put to work on plantations. In 1904 the British government, pressured by the colonial authorities, sanctioned the importation into southern Africa of 60,000 Chinese coolies, whose working conditions were even harder and wages lower than those of the Africans. They worked under armed guard for ten hours a day, and received only two shillings. In 1905 their average monthly wages were 41 shillings 6 pence, while for local and white workers the figures were 52 shillings 3 pence and 26 pounds respectively.⁴ Following the termination of the contract period the Chinese did not have the right to settle in southern Africa, they could not acquire private property, etc. Not only did the exploitation of Chinese workers bring the mine owners direct economic benefits, it also enabled them to keep the wages of natives down to the bare minimum and to lower the wages of white proletarians.

The hellish labour, meagre wages and prison-like living conditions were generating protests among the non-white workers with increasing frequency. Their first strike, a spontaneous two-day job action, in which some 100 persons took part, occurred in 1882 at the Kimberley diamond mines to protest the management's attempt to lower wages. In 1895, 200 African dockers of the Durban port

¹ E. S. Sachs, *The Anatomy of Apartheid*, Collet, London, 1965, pp. 120

² Ibid, p. 121.

³ D. Hobart Houghton, Jenifer Dagut, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 318.

⁴ L. M. Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa, 1902-1910*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960, p. 14.

in Natal demanded a wage increment from their employers. In July 1896 their example was followed by African miners from the Zululand Goldfields company in Nongweni. Although there is no information about the effectiveness of these strikes, they were very significant as the first collective actions of the African proletariat in the defence of their rights.

The actions of white workers were also of an economic nature. In 1889, for example, machine shop workers of Johannesburg staged a two-week walkout. They demanded higher wages and a shorter working week, and they won their demands. Sometimes strikes were held for the purpose of thwarting an infringement on the workers' rights being planned by employers. Such were the actions by bricklayers and plasterers in Witwatersrand in 1897, miners in Klipfontein in 1903, etc. Particularly vigorous actions were undertaken by printers, who staged strikes in 1897 (Cape town), 1898 (Pretoria), 1902 (Johannesburg), and 1903 (Pretoria and Marrisburg).

Protests also came from Chinese workers, who revolted against intolerable working conditions. A strike by Chinese workers is known to have occurred at the Randfontein mine in the early 1900s (c. 1904). There were also mass flights from the mines. When the colonial authorities began reprisals against the "rebels", radical circles in Britain mounted a protest movement. As a result, the British government was forced to declare that in the future, Chinese workers would be punished only by a court sentence.

In the early 1880s trades organisations began to form among the white workers, particularly the immigrants. They took shape primarily in the colonies of Cape and Natal. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners was set up in 1881 in Cape Town and in 1882 in Durban; the Typographical Society was formed in 1888 in Durban. A similar society arose in Maritzburg. The Witwatersrand Mine Employees' and Mechanics' Union (WMEMU) was set up in Transvaal in 1892, and in 1896—the Amalgamated Union of Plasterers in Johannesburg and Durban.¹ By 1897 seven divisions of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners were already functioning in Natal, and the Association of Post and Telegraph Workers appeared in 1902. However, the movement of the white workers of southern Africa exhibited a distinctly guarded attitude to proletarians of non-European extraction. There was still another source of contradictions. Unskilled Boers, who were forced to land jobs at British-owned enterprises, claimed, "by right" as whites, higher wages than those which were paid to non-white workers. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the employers who strove to hire local workers, but they disliked the latter, even more. Thus

¹ A. B. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

there existed among various national and racial groups of the south African proletariat considerable alienation and even enmity, which the colonialists fanned and took advantage of to prevent the consolidation of the working class in its struggle against the powers that be.

Typical in this respect was one of the first strikes by white workers which broke out at the Kimberley diamond mines in 1884 in protest against frisking. During the strike a clash with the police occurred, in which seven workers were killed and 40 wounded. As a result of the strike regular frisking of white workers was abolished. The strikers were satisfied by this, although the humiliating procedure was preserved for the Africans.¹

Also indicative was the stance taken by the leadership of some of the first trade unions. Upholding the rights of the white workers before the employers, they simultaneously "defended" them from competition afforded by non-Europeans. Thus, the leaders of the Typographical Societies in Durban and Maritzburg constantly "exposed" the activities of the Immigration Council in Natal, as it supplied employers with the cheaper labour of local workers, whom it recruited outside southern Africa. The same tactics were used by the Knights of Labour, an organisation founded in 1891. While openly and vigorously unmasking the actions of employers, it championed the "defence" of the white proletariat from competition afforded by non-European workers.² Nonetheless, the white workers' movement played an indisputable positive role in the gradual formation of the African proletariat and the development of its class struggle.

Some of the European immigrants who were later to become prominent in the South African labour movement headed trade-union associations during those years. Thus, the founder and leader of the WMEMU was a Scottish immigrant, a mechanic named J. T. Bain. Another Scotsman, carpenter Andrew Watson, was active in the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. A particularly great contribution to the development of the labour movement in southern Africa was made by an English immigrant—mechanic W. H. Andrews (Comrade Bill), who assumed leadership of the mechanics' union in 1904.³

Although the European immigrants brought the advanced ideas of internationalism and socialism into the proletarian movement in southern Africa, they spread them primarily among white workers. In 1895 the Johannesburg and District Trades Council decreed that

¹ H. J. and R. E. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969, pp. 41-42.

² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³ R. K. Cope, *Comrade Bill. The Life and Times of W. H. Andrews, Workers' Leader*, Cape Town, 1943, p. 46.

May 1 be celebrated annually as Labour Day. The Social-Democratic Federation, the first socialist organisation, was founded in Cape Town in 1902 as an offshoot of the well-known British organisation of the same name. The federation declared its goal to be the destruction of capitalism and landlordism, the socialisation of all means of production and the establishment of control over them in the interests of the people.¹

The federation strove to set up ties with the trade unions, and later began active work among non-European workers. Even though prior to 1905 it was more like a small study group due to the nature of its work, its role in the formation of the proletarian movement in southern Africa was rather appreciable. It was largely due to the influence of the Social-Democratic Federation that the membership of trade unions in southern Africa grew from 3,836 to 6,343 persons between 1900 and 1905.

Tropical Africa

As it gained control of states situated on the territory of Tropical Africa, European capitalism stepped up the exploitation of their natural and manpower resources. Turning this region into a profitable source of raw materials and a sales market, the invaders radically changed the thrust of the socio-economic development of the African peoples. They sought to force the African peasant to abandon subsistence farming, the basis of the economy of Tropical Africa. Indigent inhabitants were forcibly recruited for labour conscription (construction of roads and commercial and military ports, haulage of cargoes, felling of trees, etc.). The gratuitous manpower was recruited by armed detachments, while the African tribal chiefs and elders were forced to assist them. In Uganda, every African (aside from landowners and hired workers) was obliged to work one month a year for the Europeans; in German East Africa it was one in every four months. In Portuguese Angola labour conscription for Africans from 14 to 60 years of age was legalised by the decrees of 1878 and 1899. In Mozambique, under the Decree of 1899, an African was obliged to work up to six months a year for the Portuguese colonialists. Unpaid labour conscription was preserved in Tropical Africa right up to the toppling of the colonial regimes, but its significance decreased with the passage of time, for it was increasingly ousted by hired labour.

In order to keep themselves supplied with local produce from local farms and gratuitous labour, the colonialists used the traditional

¹ W. H. Harrison, *Memories of a Socialist in South Africa. 1903-1947*, Cape Town, 1948, p. 5.

institution of payment to the tribal élite in kind or by work, (the élite were considered the owners of all plots of land). By declaring the lands their own property, the colonial authorities became "legitimate" successors to those rights which belonged to tribal chiefs and their retinue. This was begun by the granting of concessions to European companies. In 1898-99 the German companies of South Cameroon and North Cameroon received control over 40 per cent of the entire territory of the colony. In Southwest Africa the German companies owned 30 per cent of the lands. The territory of foreign concessions in the French Congo in 1899 amounted to 780,000 square kilometres, which far exceeded the land mass of all of France. Foreigners usually received concessions to plots of land which were not being worked at the time in question and which had been declared as belonging to no one. In the Belgian Congo, nine-tenths of the arable lands were handed over to foreign colonial concessions in this fashion; in Tanganyika, Cameroon and several other colonies all the lands were proclaimed property of the Crown.

Meanwhile, the economic forms which existed in Tropical Africa at that time (slash-burn clearing-fallow tillage, nomadic livestock breeding, collection of herbs, berries, etc.) were based on reserve stocks of land. Innovations ruined African peasant farming: food and work obligations took increasing dimensions; the tribal élite continued to exist, and sought to win additional obligations in their favour; finally, the shortage of reserve lands which were partially used by foreign capitalists for industrial purposes led to a sharp drop in the harvest yields of peasant plots.

The concessions were a prerequisite for the land expropriation of the peasantry, which began in Tropical Africa in the early twentieth century. The first African reservation, the result of direct and mass driving of the peasants off their lands, was created in 1904 in Kenya, and later this happened in other countries as well.

In order to exploit the African colonies ever more intensively, European capital needed a constant flow of manpower. The periodic forced mobilisation of the population and even the usurping of rights to own land could not ensure this. For this reason there arose the need for further measures of indirect coercion. Payment in kind came to be replaced by monetary taxes, the chief forms of which were a per capita tax (it was established in Tanganyika in 1897, in the Ivory Coast in 1901, and in Southern Rhodesia in 1904) and a tax on huts.

The reasoning behind this innovation was that it forced the peasant to go to work for European capitalists, as only in this way could he obtain the money to pay the taxes.

Peasants who left their villages in search of a living found themselves in a very difficult situation. Wage labour at that time was

virtually a variety of slave labour. The very hiring of workers was of a forced nature. In many colonies there operated representatives of employment agencies who, through false promises and direct coercion, forced Africans to sign work contracts. Under an 1897 agreement one such organisation, the Portuguese Company of Mozambique, annually shipped up to 100,000 Africans to Transvaal, having in effect revived the outlawed slave trade. It also organised night round-ups of those who managed to avoid signing a contract, and later sent them under guard to European-owned plantations. The nature of the hiring practices was eloquently shown by the numerous flights by Africans en route to their destination.

The colonialists ruthlessly exploited the contracted workers, and paid them pittance. For example, in Togo, instead of the official 20 pfennigs per diem, workers received 50 pfennigs per week.¹ In East Africa, German employers paid their workers less than the cost of a daily ration of rice.² The death rate among the Africans was so high that half, and sometimes even two-thirds of the workers did not survive until the end of their contracts.³

The average wage of an African in Southern Rhodesia in the mid-1880s was somewhat higher, amounting to ten shillings per month. However, even this was just enough to buy food for merely twelve days.⁴ Employers kept expenses for the upkeep of their workers to a minimum. There were no allowances or sick benefits. The degree of exploitation at the colonialists' enterprises was so high that the exploited worker was able to exist solely owing to his ties with his village.

The illiteracy of hired workers (they were usually peasants working off their tax obligations at the colonialists' enterprises) and the extremely low level of their class consciousness, determined the nature of the first protest actions against colonial exploitation. As a rule, they were spontaneous riots, as well as various forms of passive resistance (dodging service in punitive detachments, refusal to grow marketable crops, mass migration to avoid paying taxes, desertion of colonialists' enterprises, etc.). Between October 1900 and March 1901 alone, 25 per cent of the contracted workers deserted the mines of Southern Rhodesia.⁵ At some of the mines in this colony

¹ Manfred Nussbaum, *Togo—eine Musterkolonie?*, Rütten & Loening, Berlin, 1962, S. 80-82.

² I. S. Charny, *The Beginning of Germany's Colonial Expansion in Africa (1879-1885)*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 171-72, (in Russian).

³ Marianne Friedländer, "Die deutsche Kolonialpolitik in Kamerun von ihren Anfängen bis 1914", *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, Gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe, 1955/56, Heft 4, S. 314-15.

⁴ *African Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 291, 1974, p. 221.

⁵ *Journal of African History*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1973, p. 245.

the percentage of deserters was even higher (at the Surprise mine in 1902 it amounted to 29.4, and 40 per cent of the remaining Africans refused to work, citing illness as the reason).¹ There also existed such a form of resistance as intentional wasting of time, which became so widespread at a number of South Rhodesian mines that it caused the employers to take harsh control measures.

In 1904 and 1905 a wave of spontaneous riots rose in Upper Shari and at Lobaye Basin (Belgian Congo), which were directed against the regime of slavery and forced labour in the colony. Similar actions took place in 1902 in Angola. The characteristic features of such spontaneous acts of rebellion were the destruction of hiring offices, vandalising of machines and murdering of supervisors and owners.

The actions of the masses sometimes forced the invaders to make concessions. Thus, the mass flight of Africans from Angola compelled the Portuguese authorities in 1873 to abandon the planned tax increase on huts. A demonstration drawing 5,000 Nigerians in 1895, which was held to protest the introduction of taxes on land and housing, prompted the British colonialists to scuttle this extortion for the time being.

All these actions took place within the framework of the national liberation struggle of the African peoples and were generally directed at the restoration of pre-colonial patterns.

In Tropical Africa the early twentieth century witnessed spontaneous strikes staged by African workers in defence of their economic interests. Such was a miners' strike in 1901 against wage decreases at the Camperdown mine in Southern Rhodesia. The strikers' persistence and unity earned them victory. In Liberia seamen of the Kru tribe staged a job action in 1903, demanding a pay hike and improved working conditions. However, prior to 1905 strikes in Tropical Africa were a rare phenomenon. The social heterogeneity of the Africans employed at European enterprises, the predominance among them of forcibly contracted peasants with their blind obedience to the master cultivated by the invaders, and religious and caste prejudices had their effect. Voluntarily hired Africans also preserved close contacts with the villages, and were in the grips of tribal community and racial submissiveness imbued by the colonialists. All this served to hold back the maturing of the class consciousness of the Africans who were becoming hired workers.

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST MOVEMENT AND THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLES

The attitude of international Social-Democracy towards the nationalities and national-colonial issue was closely bound up with its views on the state and revolution, on the question of war and militarism,

¹ Ibid.

on new phenomena in the political, economic and social development of bourgeois society, and on the paths of the transition to socialism. During the existence of the Second International these views underwent substantial changes, which were caused by the growing influence of opportunism in the international socialist movement.

At the first two congresses of the Second International the nationalities and national-colonial issues were not examined specially; nor were they on the agenda of the London Congress in 1896. Nonetheless, after examining a report on the political activities of the working class, this congress passed a resolution on the right of nations to self-determination: "The Congress declares in favour of the full autonomy of all nationalities and its sympathy with the workers of any country at present suffering under the yoke of military, national or other despotisms; and calls upon the workers in all such countries to fall into line, side by side with the class-conscious workers of the world, to organise for the overthrow of international capitalism and the establishment of International Social-Democracy."¹ A separate point in the resolution dealt with the powers' colonial policy: "The Congress declares that, whatever the pretext, whether it be religious or in the interests of so-called civilisation, colonial extension is only another name for the extension of the area of capitalist exploitation in the exclusive interest of the capitalist class."² These decisions of the London Congress essentially corresponded to the conclusions of Marx and Engels on the necessity and possibility for the proletariat to obtain the support of the oppressed peoples fighting for national liberation.

It is well known that Marx and Engels did not advance the slogan of the self-determination of nations as the mainspring of the policy of the revolutionary proletariat on the nationalities question. If such a step were made in the pre-imperialist period, it could also signify approval of those national movements which were directed against the cause of the international proletariat and revolution.

In the late nineteenth century the nationalities question in the major West European countries was resolved to the extent to which it could have been resolved within the framework of bourgeois-democratic transformations. By the 1870s Italy had already become a unified state in which the accelerated formation of a proletariat was taking place. German democracy had not succeeded in uniting the country "from below"; it had been united "by iron and blood" "from above". Nonetheless, this was a step forward: the proletariat obtained wide scope for future battles against the bourgeoisie. At

¹ *Full Report of the Proceedings of the International Workers' Congress. London, July and August 1896*, printed and published by "The Labour Leader", Glasgow-London, 1896, p. 32.

² *Ibid.*

approximately the same time highly significant changes began to occur in Europe's major capitalist states: free competition was being replaced by monopoly; powerful finance groups were forming as a result of the merger of banking capital with industrial; the export of capital was growing; the division of the world between monopoly groups was rapidly drawing to a conclusion and the struggle for its re-division was mounting. The centre of gravity of the nationalities problem was shifting to the East. Subjugated peoples were rising in struggle for independence, for the creation of their own national states; such was the essential political content of those liberation movements which were growing in the colonies and semi-colonies.

Tsarist Russia had entirely lost its specific status as the stronghold of European reaction. That tsarism had weakened substantially was not the only reason for this. Of no less importance is the fact that by the end of the period under examination the bourgeoisie of the European capitalist countries had lost their progressive potential. From then on the stronghold of European reaction was a group of powers which had become imperialist; in the new era the bourgeoisie of these powers were not even theoretically capable of pursuing progressive policies which would accord with the interests of the peoples.

In this situation the liberation movement in the oppressed countries naturally acquired an anti-imperialist nature: the liberation storm which was arising in the East proved to be directed against those powers which in toto constituted the nucleus of the emergent imperialist system. The imminent proletarian socialist revolution was also spearheaded against imperialism. The liberation movements of the colonial peoples, even if they were led by the bourgeoisie, became part of the emergent worldwide revolutionary process, whose main driving force was the proletariat.

It is not surprising that Lenin viewed the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination and the formation of independent states as the central political demand in the nationalities and national-colonial issues. Championing the slogan of self-determination of nations, Lenin, on behalf of revolutionary Social-Democracy, called on the majority of the oppressed population of the world to ally itself with the proletariat.

The resolution of the London Congress was an important step in this direction. Adopted, however, prior to the start of the imperialist era, it still did not make the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination the basis of the policy of the revolutionary proletariat on the nationalities and national-colonial issues; it did not contain any special point on the provision of the right to state secession to the oppressed peoples; it was not directly addressed to the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, which were still not viewed

as one of the powerful forces of the world revolutionary process led by the working class.

The Paris Congress of the Second International in 1900 devoted a great deal of attention to national-colonial problems, forming a special colonial commission. Its speaker at the congress was H. van Kol, a Dutch Socialist who had lived a long while on Java. He spoke about the misfortunes of the colonial peoples: "Do you not hear the long cries of suffering on all overseas continents against the abuses and against the crimes of militarism, imperialism and capitalism? Our socialist conscience must and can respond to these cries of pain. Socialists do not differentiate between races; all people have a heart and mind."¹ On behalf of the commission van Kol proposed a resolution condemning the bourgeoisie's colonial policy.

H. Hyndman, who represented the British Socialists, pointed out the role of Britain as the "largest colonial power in the world"; he called to mind the fact that the British bourgeoisie controls the destinies of 350 million people in India. Hyndman cited figures attesting to the extremely low living standards of Indians. Each year British capitalism pumped 30 million pounds sterling in profits from these poverty-stricken people, he said. "At the present time 75 million people are suffering from hunger because we take their riches from them. 'Suck all the blood from the colonies'—such is the colonial policy."² These words, full of sorrow and condemnation, were met with sympathy by the congress. Hyndman also pointed out that the British were pursuing a similar policy with the help of their accomplices in China. He concluded his speech with the words: "I hope that you will support a resolution condemning the British government for having destroyed a civilisation which was perhaps better than ours."³

The resolution, which the congress approved unanimously, stated that the development of capitalism was leading to growing colonial expansion, and that the latter in turn was a reason for clashes among states. The exclusive objective of the colonial policy of the bourgeoisie was "to increase the profits of the capitalist class and to maintain the capitalist system by drawing blood and money from the proletarian producer via crimes and innumerable cruelties against peoples conquered by armed force."⁴ The organised proletariat, declared the congress, must use all the means at its disposal to fight the bourgeoisie's colonial expansion and expose its atrocities. A resolution was passed to investigate the colonial issue, "to particularly

¹ *Cinquième congrès socialiste international tenu à Paris du 23 au 27 septembre 1900. Compte rendu analytique officiel*, Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, Paris, 1901, p. 91.

² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

further the formation of colonial socialist parties affiliated to organisations in metropolises" and "to establish ties among the socialist parties of different colonies".¹

The Paris Congress also addressed itself to the question of the colonial policy in the resolution on world peace, militarism and the abolition of permanent armed forces which was proposed by Rosa Luxemburg. Militarism was characterised in the resolution as an instrument of colonial expansion which was hindering the normal development of society, exacerbating international rivalry and tensions and "threatening to turn war into a permanent state". The emphasis here was placed on the connection between colonialism and war. The resolution called on workers' parties of all countries to vigorously oppose militarism and the colonial policy by creating an alliance of the proletarians of all countries for the sake of perpetuating peace in response to the creation of an alliance of capitalist classes and governments for the sake of perpetuating war.²

This issue also figured prominently at the Amsterdam Congress of 1904. Van Kol again delivered a report on the colonial policy and Social-Democracy. The main ideas of the report could be summed up as follows: since colonies would exist for many centuries to come it was essential to think "about the interests of the natives" and to fulfil a "sacred moral duty". "Civilised countries" were and would be carrying on colonial expansion. It was historically inevitable and absolutely insurmountable; overproduction in capitalist society, the limited market in civilised countries, the need to have colonies as a "safety valve from the pressure by the proletariat"—all that was pushing capitalism onto the path of colonial expansion. The speaker condemned "forcible seizures". Yet he answered in the negative to the question he had raised: "Should any colonial possession be condemned?" Moreover, he contended that following the socialist revolution "modern countries" would not be able to do without colonies. He said that it was impermissible to "abandon half of the globe to the whim of peoples which are still in the infancy of their development and which leave the tremendous riches of their depths and the most fertile parts of our planet untouched."

Marx and Engels had already voiced the idea of the possibility of bypassing or cutting short the period of capitalist development. The conditions necessary for the realisation of this idea could arise,

¹ Ibid. Socialist parties were still non-existent in the colonies. In the years to come, even of the West European Social-Democrats the Dutch Tribunists (Left Social-Democrats) alone would take an active part in forming a Marxist party in the colony of "their" bourgeoisie.

² Rosa Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 1, 1893 bis 1905, Erster Halband, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1970, S. 808.

they said, as a result of a socialist revolution effected by the proletariat of capitalist countries, and a democratic liberation revolution carried out by the people of a backward country.

This idea, on the basis of which Lenin formulated his doctrine on the non-capitalist path of development in the backward countries, was not to van Kol's liking. "Karl Marx's hypothesis," he said, meaning Marx's conclusion that a number of countries can at least partially bypass the capitalist period in their economic evolution, "has not been realised, primitive peoples will reach civilisation only after this Calvary." For this reason, he claimed, "it is imperative to make the growth of industrial capitalism possible in the colonies too, even if the old forms of ownership had to be sacrificed to do so. At the same time Social-Democracy must bend every effort to combat the degenerate influence of this capitalist development, the more so because the population cannot be expected to wage a battle on its own."

Van Kol called upon Social-Democracy, while furthering capitalist development in the colonies, to help improve the condition of the natives. However, colonial expansion was destroying the "old forms of ownership" which van Kol was talking about and which were slowing down the development of capitalism in the colonies; therefore Social-Democracy ought to support expansion by making it more humane. Stating that the colonial expansion of capitalism is a natural process, van Kol did not at all pose the question of how Social-Democracy could use the situation which had taken shape as a result of this expansion to promote the cause of the revolution. Reformism and the departure from internationalism were closely intertwined here; however, they were camouflaged behind an alleged magnanimous desire to help the oppressed. To listen to the reformists, the problems of the East were of no significance for the confrontation with capitalism which was the foremost task of the organised international labour movement.

In the practical section of his report van Kol, contradicting his own thesis about the inevitability of "full-scale" capitalism in colonies, proposed fighting to hold back the natives' dispossession of their land. To substantiate this policy, he expressed doubt that the natives would ever form a "class-conscious proletariat": "Race and the influence of history will make themselves felt."¹ These words were uttered by a person who had just prior to this declared that "Socialists do not differentiate between races".

¹ *Sixième congrès socialiste international tenu à Amsterdam du 14 au 20 août 1904. Compte-rendu analytique publié par le Secrétariat Socialiste International, Bruxelles, 1904, pp. 41-43; Materials on the History of the First and Second Internationals, pp. 256-64.*

The resolution adopted by the Congress obliged Socialist parties and their parliamentary representatives not to sanction bills of an imperialist or protectionist nature and to come out against predatory campaigns and military credits for colonial purposes. It also demanded that a struggle be waged against monopolies and large land concessions in colonies, and proposed that Socialist parties expose coercive actions against colonial peoples, seek measures from governments for defending these peoples, table bills in parliaments aimed at ensuring their well-being, and particularly to see that the indigenous population of the colonies are not deprived of their property through deceit or force. The resolution indicated that the crux of any colonial problem lies in the establishment of the self-government of the peoples of colonies, and insisted that the natives be provided a level of freedom and independence which corresponded to their development, keeping in mind that the complete liberation of the colonies was the desired goal.¹

Although the resolution severely criticised the colonial policy of the capitalists, it nonetheless could be interpreted as a departure from the decision of the 1896 Congress; the latter did not exclude the interpretation of the right to self-determination as the right to state secession and to independence, while the Amsterdam resolution in effect spoke about independence only as a far-off goal; following the letter and spirit of the resolution, the International went on to tie the right of oppressed nations to self-determination in with their development level. In other words, the Amsterdam resolution was based on the idea that the populations of colonies would have to take a course in "colonial education".

The Second International's approach to the nationalities and national-colonial problems was largely responsible for their solution in individual Socialist parties. In the Social-Democratic Party of Germany—the most massive and influential party of the Second International—these problems became a subject of heated discussions at the end of the nineteenth century. The party exhibited a vast range of views on the national-colonial issue.

In 1896 Eduard Bernstein set out to uphold the colonial policy. The "superior" civilisations, Bernstein reasoned, should possess certain rights as regards "inferior" ones. The leader of the revisionists defended the British policy in India, attempting to prove that if Indian peasants were in dire straits, it was their own fault: they bred too fast.

Similar views were held by Eduard David, Max Schippel, Gustav Noske, and Gerhard Hildebrand. Representatives of this trend contended that colonialism could exert a civilising influence if the colonial policy were to be continued by Socialists.

¹ *Sixième congrès socialiste international tenu à Amsterdam...*, p. 43.

In 1899 Bernstein criticised the attitude of German Social-Democracy to the colonial question. The reason for this was the discussion in the Reichstag and in the press of the question of the German government's "renting" of Jiazhou Bay, which in effect meant the annexation of a part of Chinese territory. The Social-Democratic Party protested against this in the Reichstag. It assailed "any colonial policy", referring to the "general principles" of socialism. Bernstein, however, declared the renting of Jiazhou to be justified, as it enabled Germany to take part in the division of China. Bernstein wrote later: "The colonial question is something more than a simple issue of humaneness.... It is a question of spreading culture and, as long as great cultural differences exist, a question of spreading higher culture and securing its predominance." According to Bernstein, opposition to the colonial policy leads to political "blindness": the working class "by virtue of its economic position was closely connected with society and had a stake in its development; it was therefore incorrect to assert that possessing colonies was harmful for the proletariat".¹

Karl Kautsky, one of the most prominent theoreticians of the International, initially opposed Bernstein's revisionist views on the colonial issue. In the 1880s and 1890s he had been an opponent of colonialism. For him colonialism meant first and foremost exploitation and suppression, and the crude trampling of democracy. Kautsky protested against the predator policy of German imperialism in Africa, also focussing on its negative consequences for the German working class. However, in Kautsky's eyes the peoples subjugated by the imperialists were mere objects of history; he did not see that they could eventually become powerful allies of the proletariat in the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of the world; although he propagated Marx's and Engels' conclusions on the economic justification for the desire of peoples to form national states, he did not delve into the question of to what extent these conclusions apply to the enslaved countries of the East. His acceptance of the principle of self-determination of nations was nothing more than recognition of an "ordinary" democratic slogan. Kautsky saw no connection between this slogan and the prospects for a world socialist revolution.

In 1903 Kautsky made a speech at the congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in Dresden, in which he spoke about the need to fight militarism and high-sea domination; his speech was largely directed against revisionist colonial policy as well. Nevertheless, Kautsky's judgements reflected an underestimation of new phenomena which had emerged in world development. Kautsky

¹ *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, Bd. 2, 1907, S. 989, 996.

denied that the colonial peoples could vigorously oppose violence and plunder by allying with the international proletariat and could thus strike a blow at colonialism. In short, he reasoned that, on the one hand, the colonies were unable to fight for their liberation and, on the other, it was hopeless for the proletariat to combat capitalism on the colonial issue. All this brought about the practical policy of "non-interference" which Kautsky proposed to the Social-Democrats. In Kautsky's eyes the appearance of the "colonial world" and the conclusion of the division of the world among the capitalist powers did not make any radical changes in the alignment of political and social forces in the world. All the Social-Democrats had to do was accumulate strength to enable them to assume power, while the colonial peoples would have to wait for this moment.

Kautsky's viewpoint on the national-colonial issue was just as untenable even at the time he was the leading SDPG theoretician in the struggle against the revisionist repudiation of the revolution and the concept of the peaceful "growth" of capitalism into socialism.

Of great interest are the views of August Bebel on the national-colonial issue. During the struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law he published an article entitled "The Mohammedan-Arab Cultural Period". Emphasising the enormous contribution made by the Arabs and Islam to world culture, Bebel came out against the Europocentric views of bourgeois ideologists denying the role of non-European peoples in history. Bebel was firmly convinced that the revolutionary Social-Democrats could not sanction the oppression of other peoples, and that they were obliged to provide opposition to aggressive and coercive actions aimed at subjugating other countries. In this sense he proved himself to be a wise proletarian political leader. Admittedly, even Bebel was far from viewing the oppressed peoples as a major anti-imperialist force.

A most typical example of Bebel's attitude to the colonial problem was his speech in the Reichstag on November 19, 1900 on the involvement of German troops in the suppression of an uprising by Yihetuans in China. The uprising, Bebel pointed out, had been caused by actions of the capitalist powers. He exposed the fallacy of the Kaiser's assertion that the cause of the uprising had been the "fanatical hatred and obscurantist prejudices" of the Chinese population. Bebel spoke about the coercion, crimes and injustices perpetrated by the foreigners over several decades against the Chinese people, who had manifested patience throughout all this time. The collective note of the imperialist powers which was presented to the Chinese government, said Bebel, was an act of interference in the affairs of another state unprecedented in the history of international relations. In conclusion Bebel pointed out that the hatred of the Chinese population towards the Europeans was a consequence of the

policy of the foreign enslavers, and that the Social-Democrats would continue to struggle against this policy, for it ran counter to their consciences; the Social-Democrats did not wish to allocate a single pfenning for this policy.¹

Bebel returned to the colonial issue in a speech he delivered in the Reichstag on January 30, 1905 following repressions by German military and civilian authorities in connection with an uprising of Hereros in Southwest Africa. "If one could imagine," he said, "that the population of any civilised European state were subjected to even a semblance of the treatment as the population of Southwest Africa was an uprising or revolution would have broken out in this state long ago." He pointed to the fact that the Hereros were subjected to immeasurable oppression.²

Much attention was focussed on nationalities and national-colonial questions by Rosa Luxemburg. As early as 1896 she assailed the colonial aggression of the capitalist powers. In 1899, in her work *Social Reform or Revolution?* Luxemburg criticised colonialism from a proletarian vantage point, stressing out that it met the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Unlike the majority of leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, Luxemburg not only censured the government's policy in China, but also called for the organisation of mass-scale campaigns against it. In her view, the potential consequences of the colonial policy were particularly important for the proletarian cause. At the Paris Congress of the Second International she specified the connection between the policy of colonialism and war. Luxemburg came to the conclusion that capitalism could fall as a result of a political crisis caused by the clash of the imperialist interests of the great powers.

In 1900, at the SDPG Congress in Mainz Rosa Luxemburg protested against the intervention in China. Criticising the Party leadership, she charged that it was to blame for the SDPG's not publishing a manifesto in this connection which would explain to the public at large the monstrous step taken by the German imperialists. It was also essential, she said, to mount a propaganda campaign. "The Chinese War," Luxemburg said, "is the first event in the world political era in which all civilised states are involved, and this first onslaught of international reaction, the Holy Alliance, should have been opposed immediately with a protest by the united

¹ *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. X. Legislaturperiode, II. Session. 1900/1902*, Bd. 1, Druck und Verlag der Norddeutschen Buchdruckerei und Verlags-Anstalt, Berlin, 1901, S. 20-36.

² *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. XI. Legislaturperiode, I. Session. 1903/1905*, Bd. 6, Berlin, 1905, S. 4097.

workers' parties of Europe!"¹ The initiative should have been assumed by the party acting precisely in the country to which the leading role in the war against China belongs—the Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

While strongly condemning Bernstein's views on the colonial issue, Luxemburg rejected the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination. Underlying this position was her distorted interpretation of the primacy of the class factor over the national one. Her argumentation as regards the colonial peoples was as follows: if the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination is advanced to thus express one's attitude to coercion of nations, to condemn it, then this slogan is not necessary, for Social-Democracy has always condemned such coercion; however, if one understands the right of nations to self-determination to mean the right of the bourgeoisie to resolve its problems at the expense of the proletariat—this was precisely how Luxemburg perceived the objective content of the slogan in question—then it is simply harmful.

This erroneous point of view was based on the assumption that the problem of the formation of nations and the creation of national states had receded into the past. Lenin singled out two tendencies of world capitalism in the nationalities issue: on the one hand, the awakening and development of national life and national movements and the formation of national states, and on the other, the smashing of national partitions. Rosa Luxemburg recognised the second of these tendencies as being progressive, considering the first reactionary. She reasoned that national liberation movements were utopian or even reactionary.

The general line in the SDPG's policy on the colonial issue was elaborated at its Congress in Mainz (to the extent that that was possible in a party where different currents had been coexisting and opposing one another). With respect to the Anglo-Boer War the Congress adopted a special resolution, in which it declared its agreement with those "organised British workers" who came out against the plunderous campaign of the British colonialists, which led to the forced destruction of the Transvaal republic. The Congress described the actions of the British government as a "cruel act" brought about by "capitalism, which destroys peoples, plunders classes and nations for the sake of profits for a handful of shameless capitalist pillagers and subordinates these classes and nations to them".

A resolution was also passed condemning the punitive expedition of the imperialist powers against China. It pointed out that the colonial policy was being pursued for the purpose of capitalist exploit-

¹ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten zu Mainz vom 17. bis 21. September 1900*, Berlin, 1900, S. 165.

ation, and that this policy primarily accorded with the selfish intentions of the bourgeoisie and its desire for added profits and new markets.

The resolution stated that the plunderous colonial policy was leading to the intensification of rivalry among the powers and a growth in the production of armaments, and contained possible seats of dangerous international conflicts which called in question cultural relations and relations of exchange achieved "by peaceful means". The colonial policy was thwarting social reforms in the metropolitan countries and could lead to a "general catastrophe". "Social-Democracy, as an enemy of any oppression and any exploitation of man by man," the document reads, "most strongly protests against this plunderous policy". The Social-Democrats demanded that cultural and economic ties among the peoples of the earth be used to ensure that their rights, freedoms and independence be respected. The Congress called upon the leading party bodies to mount a vigorous protest campaign against the government's policy vis-à-vis China.¹ This decision, which mobilised the German workers for the struggle against the predator policy of imperialism, won the support of the Social-Democratic masses. German Social-Democracy as a whole still was a real political force impeding the implementation of the imperialists' plans.

However, the opportunist vacillations in the SDPG leadership had already made themselves felt. The mouthpiece of the party was becoming more and more inclined to condemn methods of German colonialism, rather than its expansionist plans themselves. The decision which was taken in Mainz and which reflected the views of revolutionary Social-Democracy, did not shut the door to opportunism in the colonial issue. The struggle among various trends in the SDPG exacerbated, this being mirrored, among other things, in the discussion on the colonial issue at the 1904 SDPG Congress in Bremen. Here Social-Democrats from Essen proposed the following resolution: "The Party Congress instructs the party group in the Reichstag to reject all colonial demands in the future." The Essen delegates tabled it, since the Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag abstained from the voting on allocations for the suppression of the Hereros uprising. Speaking at the Congress, Georg Ledebour, one of the deputies, explained this position as "concern" for the German settlements. "We are unanimous ... in our negative attitude towards the colonial enterprises in the capitalist era," Ledebour asserted. "Nevertheless, situations can arise where we will be forced to inter-

¹ *Handbuch der sozialistischen Parteitage von 1863 bis 1909*, München, 1910, S. 111-12.

fere in the colonial policy in a positive and constructive manner."¹

This minor episode was evidence of the impending split in the SDPG and the emergence of a centrist trend. The leftists in the SDPG headed by Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin, and Franz Mehring, who held anti-colonialist views, tried to implement the respective party decisions through mass-scale actions and to tie them in with the general tasks of the revolutionary class struggle; the revisionists openly voiced their support for colonial expansion; the emergent centrist current was less and less often going beyond a nominal condemnation of colonialism.

The colonial issue also figured in the policy of the French Workers' Party (FWP), which represented the current closest to Marxism in French socialism. In 1895 an anti-colonialist resolution was adopted at the FWP Congress in Romilly. A year later Paul Lafargue declared at the Party Congress in Lille that he saw three "pillars" of the capitalist system in colonialism: a remedy against overproduction, a means for enticing a portion of the proletariat of metropolitan countries, and "blood-letting", through which the bourgeoisie affirms its rule.² Nonetheless, in the press, and to a greater degree at public and party meetings questions pertaining to colonialism were given secondary importance; only methods of colonisation were actually criticised, and even they were discussed primarily to the extent to which workers in the metropole were saddled with a new financial burden and the demands of a "blood tax".

The FWP's "cautious" propaganda against colonialism was not reinforced by practical activity. Thus, actions against colonial brigandage boiled down to declarations that the deputies of the FWP would not provide a single person or a single sou for colonial expeditions. Nevertheless, some FWP deputies voted in favour of colonial annexations; in the 1890s chauvinistically-minded party figures even expressed regret that France's colonial acquisitions "proved to be meagre". Individual members of the party even participated in colonial expeditions.

The indifference of FWP leaders to colonial problems was closely bound up with their stand on the nationalities issue. This stand was demonstrated in practice during the Dreyfus case. At one time the party even accepted the nationalistic and demagogic insinuations against Dreyfus. Later Jules Guesde's supporters changed their line of conduct; they no longer spoke of Dreyfus' guilt, but neither did they defend him, although the conviction of the completely innocent Jewish officer was an act of glaring injustice. Guesde, who acclaimed Émile Zola's statement in Dreyfus' defence, nonetheless

¹ *Arbeiterklasse und nationaler Befreiungskampf*, Sonderband II, Leipzig, 1963.

² Claude Willard, *Les guesdistes*, Éditions sociales, Paris, 1965, p. 210.

signed a documents which expressed an erroneous viewpoint—that the proletarians should not take anyone's side in the Dreyfus case, but should only uphold their "own" interests.

The FWP asserted on a number of occasions that the socialist movement must not swerve from its main goals, seeking to right some "insignificant injustices". As a result the party found itself faced with the danger of isolation.

The sectarian, "nihilistic" stand of the FWP reflected the overall conceptions of party leaders who underestimated the significance of the nationalities question both in France and abroad. It is not surprising that the party leaders did not devote serious attention to colonial problems.

By contrast, Jean Jaurès showed a great interest in them. On the eve of the London Congress of the International he published an article in which he asserted that the struggle for the colonies could cause a major war at any minute, and that this would be fatal for humanity and for socialism. One should not settle, he continued, for a verbal condemnation of colonial policy: "No matter how much we expose all the vileness, corruption and brutalities which accompany colonial expansion, we cannot stop it." Moreover, if any one European state started refraining from colonial expansion, it would not lessen by one iota the lawlessness and pillage being perpetrated in Asia and Africa, for others would perpetrate them anyway. For this reason the practical stand of the Socialists was important here.

Proceeding from this assumption, Jaurès formulated "practical rules" which should be observed as regards colonial policy; see that colonial rivalry does not lead to war, and strive for more humane treatment of the enslaved peoples of Asia, Africa, and America. "Whether it is a question of the Indians subjugated by Britain, the Arabs subjugated by France, or the African peoples, on whose account all the states of Europe are fighting and quarrelling, it is the duty of Socialists to take the initiative in the parliaments of their countries tabling humane propositions and expressing protest when necessary."¹ Finally, efforts should be made to ensure that major colonial economic areas acquire an "international character". In other words, Jaurès was proposing the "internationalisation" of the most important colonial possessions.

This was a democratic programme which nonetheless did not extend beyond the bounds of the attitude widespread among the European Socialists of the time towards the colonial policy as a phenomenon which should be reformed but which was impossible to destroy. Jaurès was still thinking in terms of "civilising" and "humanitarian"

¹ Jean Jaurès, *Textes choisis. Contre la guerre et la politique coloniale*, Éditions sociales, Paris, 1959, pp 98-100.

ideas, whose realisation, even the most consistent, could not give the colonial peoples freedom. This system of views in effect implied that the colonial peoples were unprepared not only for self-determination, but also for struggle for it.

Yet, by unmasking the brutalities of colonialism and its close connection with militarism, and demanding the unification of proletarians and all the working people in the fight against war, Jaurés became an enemy of the imperialists, instilling fear in them. In his practical activity against colonialism and militarism Jaurés sided with the revolutionary Social-Democrats—the followers of Marx and Engels.

Sharp disagreements on colonial policy existed in the socialist movement in Great Britain. The first major catalyst was the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). The overwhelming majority of Socialists throughout the world considered it a colonial war in the interests of the ruling classes. The Independent Labour Party and the Social-Democratic Federation protested against this war at mass meetings and in the press, speaking out in the spirit of the resolution of the London Congress of the Second International. The Fabians, however, approved of the war and issued a manifesto demanding the annexation of the Boer republics. Its author was George Bernard Shaw. He believed that colonialism could be justified by virtue of its civilising functions. A state which impeded the expansion of international civilisation, irrespective of whether it is large or small, must disappear, he claimed. The earth was the common property of all of mankind—and common interests were superior to the interests of the nation inhabiting a particular region. From this assumption Shaw drew the conclusion that the South African gold mines should be internationalised and exploited in the interests of all nations. He believed that the ideal solution would be the entry of the Boer republics into a federal world state. However, since such a world state was still non-existent, then, from the viewpoint of the Socialists, the annexation of the Boer republics by the British Empire would be justified, since a great power was obliged to rule in the general interests of civilisation.¹

Shaw's statement evoked indignation in the British working class. Although the ILP and SDF qualified his theory as a betrayal of the principles of socialism, the majority of Fabians supported Shaw.

On the whole, however, leaders of British workers' parties devoted little attention to the problem of the colonies at that time. The exception was a number of Labourites and Socialists who had lived for some time in Asia and Africa. Hyndman was one of them. He advised the Indian National Congress to resort to resolute actions

¹ J. Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Bd I, Hannover, 1964, S. 311-12.

and expressed a positive attitude towards the prospects for an uprising in India. But he went no further.

The so-called Austro-Marxists—Karl Renner, Otto Bauer and others—even devised a system of views on the national-colonial issue. They recognised the need to preserve and consolidate national distinctions; derived from this was the demand for cultural-national (but not territorial) autonomy for ethnic minorities. The views of Renner and Bauer became rather widespread among the Austrian Socialists.

The serious danger of the idea of cultural-national autonomy lay in the fact that it imparted self-sufficing significance to the nationalities issue in the programme of the proletarian party; in effect this issue was not examined in relation to the tasks of the class struggle of the proletariat. Renner and Bauer championed the consolidation of national-bourgeois, not proletarian internationalist, forms of community, and based their conceptions of the ways of solving the national problem on an evolutionist, not a revolutionary, point of view.

Reconciling national contradictions under capitalism by a peaceful “depolitisation” of the nationalities issue—such was the utopian goal of the authors of this theory, which contradicted both Marx’s teaching on the class struggle of the proletariat, its internationalist character, and the dialectic materialist conception of history as a whole. Lenin wrote: “Consolidating nationalism within a certain ‘justly’ delimited sphere, ‘constitutionalising’ nationalism, and securing the separation of all nations from one another by means of a special state institution—such is the ideological foundation and content of cultural-national autonomy. This idea is thoroughly bourgeois and thoroughly false.”¹

Politically, the theory of national-cultural autonomy seriously damaged the cause of the proletariat, revolution, and democracy. It propagated the national separation, not international unification of the proletariat of the Austrian lands and was an alternative to the demand for the self-determination of nations, i.e., for the recognition of their right to state secession.

On the whole, the Second International did not go beyond the decisions of the 1896 London Congress on the national-colonial question, and in some respects even backed away from them. On this issue the Second International abandoned Marxist positions earlier than in many other areas. None of the leaders of the Second International or those of its major parties saw (nor could they see in the period under review) any connection between the exacerbation of

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Critical Remarks on the National Question”, *Collected Works* Vol. 20, p. 35.

the colonial and nationalities issues and the start of a new stage in capitalist development, nor did they consider the liberation movements of the oppressed peoples to be a component of the world revolutionary process. The resolution of the London Congress of the Second International on the right of nations to self-determination did not entail any mass-scale and purposeful practical actions by the parties comprising it. The leaders of the Second International grossly underestimated the prospects for a national liberation movement in the East. Its resolutions lacked the conclusion that the centre of gravity of the Social-Democrats' platform on the nationalities question following the conclusion (in general) of the period of bourgeois-democratic and national-bourgeois reforms in Western Europe should be shifted to the East (including the East of the European continent). The following postulate distinctly ran through the resolutions of the Second International and the activities of its parties: the peoples of colonial and dependent countries had still not reached the level of development where they could become allies of the international proletariat, and the latter's task lay merely in "purifying" the civilising mission of capitalism in the East from coercion and brutality.

The Second International was unable to elaborate a policy on the nationalities and national-colonial issues which would be a further development of the key ideas of Marx and Engels and which would correspond to the changed conditions. What was essential for a scientific conceptualisation of the nationalities and national-colonial questions was a comprehensive economic, social, and political analysis of the age of imperialism. Only as a result of such an analysis could one arrive at valid conclusions on the alignment of the main socio-political forces in the world; only in this way could one work out a theory and policy on the nationalities and national-colonial issues which would fully meet the real needs of the mounting struggle of the proletariat and its ultimate goals. This task was to be fulfilled by Lenin.

In the early twentieth century the slogans and policy of Bolshevism on the nationalities question signalled a new stage in the development of scientific socialist thought, although far from everyone in Western Social-Democratic parties knew about them. In his very first works dealing with these problems, Lenin stressed the capitalist essence of the imperialist policy of territorial seizures. He also emphasised that the rapidly developing capitalist industry required markets and that colonial wars were waged in the interests of a handful of capitalists.¹ Observing at the turn of the century that the world had already been divided up among the leading capitalist powers, Lenin showed the tremendous significance of this fact, which was

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The War in China", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 373-74.

fraught with the threat of a world war. He also noted the fact that colonial wars were used to divert the dissatisfaction of the broad masses from the policy of bourgeois governments.

As the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia became more and more imminent, Lenin devoted increasing attention to the nationalities question. In his "Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party", written between January and April 1902, Lenin advanced the demand for the "recognition of the right to self-determination for all nations forming part of the state".¹ In February 1903 he pointed out the crucial significance of the internationalist education of the working class; Lenin believed that unity among the workers of all nations was the mainspring of the policy of Social-Democracy on the nationalities issue. On the eve of the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party he wrote an article entitled "The National Question in Our Programme", in which he delved into the meaning of the slogan "the right of nations to self-determination", stressing that recognition of this right did not mean unqualified support of any demand for national self-determination.² Lenin severely criticised the Polish Socialist Party, whose leadership believed that Social-Democracy should always and in all circumstances demand national independence. He believed that a demand for national self-determination should be subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.³

Lenin made a thorough analysis of the revolutionary potential of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. He made this study while formulating his theory of imperialism and proletarian revolutions. Later, in his article "Inflammable Material in World Politics" (1908), Lenin described the movements of the oppressed peoples as "a rise in the mass struggle against capital and the capitalist colonial system, i.e., a system of enslavement, plunder and violence".⁴ Here he first advanced the idea that actions by the peoples against the capitalist colonial system could eventually develop into a struggle against the rule of capital.

Lenin was the first to see the hundreds of millions of the population of the colonial countries as allies of the proletariat. In Lenin's works the present-day concept of anti-imperialist struggle gradually crystallised. Whereas imperialism is not simply a policy of capital-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 30.

² V. I. Lenin, "The National Question in Our Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 454.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 461-62.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Inflammable Material in World Politics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 183.

ism, but a stage in its development, as Lenin proved later, the struggle against colonial oppression is at the same time directed against the capitalist system, if in mediated form. In other words, the awakened East can become an ally of the proletariat in its onslaught against capitalism.

Lenin's approach to the national-colonial problem made it possible to distinctly designate the three main socio-political forces of the era; the imperialist countries, divided into hostile blocs which were preparing for war; the proletariat of these countries, which already had its own parties and mass-scale trade organisations and which possessed some experience in political and economic struggle and the oppressed countries, rising in struggle for national liberation. It required great theoretical insight and knowledge to establish this at a time when imperialism appeared to be the master of the world.

Chapter 10

THE FOUNDING OF THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY, A NEW TYPE OF PROLETARIAN PARTY

As was pointed out above, new historical conditions placed new demands upon proletarian parties. Nevertheless, in the period of capitalism's relatively peaceful development, the working-class movement, including the contingents adhering to essentially Marxist positions, oriented themselves primarily towards preserving and expanding bourgeois-democratic gains, in particular, the fight for universal and equal suffrage and for social reforms benefiting the working people. By relying heavily on the legal, especially parliamentary forms of struggle, the working-class movement made considerable progress in these fields. Some Social-Democratic parties extended their influence, while the working class in capitalist countries became better organised.

In spite of all this, an overly optimistic assessment of the success scored by these means, as well as the underestimation of the fact that changing objective conditions create new arenas for the working-class struggle, gave rise to a tendency which subsequently led to the loss of the militant, revolutionary spirit West European Social-Democracy once possessed. Moreover, some of the principles that initially underlay the activity of the Social-Democratic parties now fell short of the objective conditions.

The Russian Marxists, and notably V. I. Lenin, who had been closely studying the socialist movement abroad, were aware of its strong and weak points. While insisting upon the assimilation of all that was valuable in the experience of international Social-Democracy, Lenin called for search of new ways to fit the changing world situation and to meet the specific Russian context. He held that the working class needed a party which, while dealing with the general democratic problems, should be able to lead the masses, unite the widest possible sections of the working people and rally them for an all-out assault on capitalism.

Though practically the entire working-class movement and its Marxist vanguard faced the task of founding a new type of proletarian party that would take advantage of the objective prerequisites for the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society, it was only in Russia that, owing to the efforts of Lenin and his associates, this task was successfully accomplished. Indeed, the attendant work for the implementation of a practical political action programme was at the core of the development of the Russian Social-Democratic movement in the early years of the twentieth century.

LENIN'S PLAN FOR FORMING A REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST PARTY OF THE RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT

The First RSDLP Congress held in 1898 officially acknowledged the tendency toward rallying Russian Social-Democracy round a platform of revolutionary Marxism and making it the political vanguard of the working class. Shortly after the congress, however, the RSDLP started to disintegrate and turned into "a shapeless conglomeration of local party organisations".¹ This was largely due to the great influx of young revolutionaries into Social-Democratic organisations whose convictions were based not on personal experience, but rather on knowledge of superficial or even vulgar commentaries to the works of the founders of Marxism. The majority of these young people worshipped spontaneity in the working-class movement. Their main concern was the economic condition of the working class. They underestimated the capacity of the working class as an active political force, denying that the Party had any role to play in propagating socialist ideas or in organising the working masses to fight for their immediate interests and ultimate goals. As G. V. Plekhanov put it, "'Economism' was as rampant among the 'young' as infection"².

As the result of police actions aimed at "clearing" cities and industrial centres of militants involved in the working-class movement, many tried and tested proletarian revolutionaries were imprisoned or exiled, while the leadership of Social-Democratic organisations was taken over by the opportunist "young blood". For a time, the opportunist trend of "Economism" dominated the RSDLP.

The Economists did not strive to unite proletarian revolutionaries on an all-Russian scale; they were not interested in elaborating programmatic and political principles of the proletariat's struggle for socialism, or in giving the Party more organisational strength.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 479.

² G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. XII, Gosizdat, Moscow, 1925, p. 38 (in Russian).

Though after the First Congress the Social-Democratic movement retained a tendency towards further growth (Social-Democratic organisations continued to spring up throughout the country, their ranks were continuously reinforced with an ever increasing number of adherents who took the place of the victims of police reprisals), V. I. Lenin rightly defined these years as "a period of disunity, dissolution, and vacillation".¹ Having founded a party, "Russian Social-Democracy seems to have exhausted, for the time being, all its strength in making this tremendous step forward and has gone back to the former isolated functioning of separate local organisations".²

Maturing gradually, Economism took final shape as an opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement in the second half of the 1890s. The adherents of the trend initially expressed their ideas through the newspaper *Rabochaya Mysl*, their main mouthpiece. As Lenin said, the leading article of its first issue published in October 1897 showed "in bold relief the entire spirit of... 'Economism' generally".³ It revealed dislike if not hostility, of political tasks, as well as a slavish worship of the spontaneity in the working-class movement, stemming from an oversimplified conception of the well-known theses of scientific socialism on the primacy of economics over politics, and on the emancipation of the working class being exclusively the result of its own efforts. The editorial held that "the economic basis of the movement is eclipsed by the effort never to forget the political ideal"; it declared the slogan of "the workers for the workers", and said strike funds were "more valuable to the movement than a hundred other organisations and that "politics always obediently follows economics". The demagogic statement that ... "the virility of the working-class movement is due to the fact that the workers themselves are at last taking their fate into their own hands, and out of the hands of the leaders" was accompanied by an appeal to the workers to "fight, knowing that they are fighting not for the sake of some future generation, but for themselves and their children".⁴ Such statements, calculated for the as yet unawakened political consciousness of the majority of the proletarians, did not differ in essence from the ideas of the bourgeois reformists who tried to divert the working-class movement from the path of revolutionary struggle.

The most exhaustive and outspoken declaration of the fundamental tenets of Economism is to be found in the lamentable document entitled the *Credo*, compiled in 1899 by Y. D. Kuskova, Bernsteinism's

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 518.

² V. I. Lenin, "Our Immediate Task", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 215.

³ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 380.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 380-81.

dedicated exponent in Russian journalism at the time. An eloquent expression of the sentiments of international revisionism turned the *Credo* into a document of "the new trend". Paraphrasing Voltaire, V. I. Lenin wrote that "had there been no *Credo*, it would have been worth inventing one".¹

Kuskova distorted the history of the international working-class movement and the emergence and spread of the ideas of scientific socialism to allege that its fundamental law was "the line of least resistance". She said that Marxism was in crisis, and denounced the proletarian Marxist parties' striving for power. In Kuskova's opinion the only worthwhile goal was to reform modern society along democratic lines.

In keeping with the attempts to impose the policy of repudiating the struggle for a radical transformation of social relations upon the proletariat's parties the *Credo* declared that "the practical demands of the moment would acquire greater weight" (which echoes Bernstein's thesis: "The movement is everything, the final goal is nothing."). Proceeding to a similar misconception of the Russian context, Kuskova launched the following appeal for the rejection of the independent policy of the working class: "All this talk of an independent workers' political party is nothing but a mere transplanting of foreign targets and results onto our soil...". She went on to write: "The Russian Marxists have but one option: to participate in, i.e. assist, the economic struggle of the proletariat and to take part in the liberal activities."²

It should be noted that both the conceptions and the practices of the Economists had several variations. For instance, an unobservant reader could overlook the basic similarity between the views expressed in *Rabocheye Dyelo* (The Worker's Cause), a journal published from 1899 on by the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, and those expounded by the author of the *Credo* or propagated by the outspoken Economists contributing to *Rabochaya Mysl* (Workers' Thought). In fact, however, *Rabocheye Dyelo* preferred to propound the Economists' ideas, disguising their true nature. In this respect, the journal's editors followed the recommendations of the German opportunist Auer who reproached Bernstein with only one thing—with being too outspoken in expressing his views.

Because *Rabocheye Dyelo* was willing to compromise with all shades of opportunism and revisionism, its publications fully conveyed the spirit of disunity and vacillation characteristic of Russian Social-Democracy at the close of the nineteenth century. Those of the Social-Democrats who were prepared poorly for a long and bitter

¹ Ibid., p. 364.

² Cited from *The Credo* as published in Lenin's "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats" (cf. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 167-82).

struggle against tsarism and the bourgeoisie were easily swayed by *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s disregard for the need for persistent and thorough theoretical work and its attempts to unscrupulously inject orthodox Marxism with the "latest" inventions of revisionism.

On the one hand, Economism doomed the workers of Russia to sporadic and isolated action, needless sacrifice, groping in the dark and, on the other, reduced Social-Democrats to mere recorders of events. Such was the theory and tactics of disuniting the working-class movement and socialism. The wide spread of Economism in the second half of the 1890s seriously impaired the revolutionary working-class movement in Russia, predetermined the limited character of the results of the proletarian struggle, and hampered the development of the working class. In this context, it was the duty of all revolutionary Social-Democrats to declare war on any and all manifestations of Economism. G. V. Plekhanov wrote: "We must by all means find a way out of this chaotic and shameful situation."¹

At the turn of the century an ideological and political struggle against all kinds of opportunism was made all the more imperative by the fact that the Party of the Russian Social-Democrats had yet to elaborate and test in practice in the course of the revolutionary struggle, its programme, fundamental tactics and organisational principles. "Under these circumstances," Lenin wrote, "what at first sight appears to be an 'unimportant' error may lead to most deplorable consequences... The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for very many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or the other 'shade'".²

Lenin was the first to raise his voice in defence of the revolutionary trend in Russian Social-Democracy and against distorting and vulgarising Marxism in the spirit of Economism. When he read the *Credo*, in July 1899, he realised at once how urgent it was to come out without delay and with the firmest resolve against spreading and propagating the anti-Marxist views, cynically propounded in this document, within the RSDLP. "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats", written by Lenin and approved at the conference attended by the 17 exiled Social-Democrats living in the Minusinsk area at the time, was, in effect, an open declaration of war on Economism. Lenin and his supporters resolutely protested against the distortion of the history and the revolutionary theory of the international working-class movement, against the attempts to reduce Russian Social-Democracy to the role of assistant, if not servitor, to the liberal bourgeoisie and diverting it "...from the path it has already marked out—the formation of an independent political

¹ G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. XII, p. 42.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 369-70.

working-class party which is inseparable from the class struggle of the proletariat and which has for its immediate aim the winning of political freedom".¹ Lenin called upon the Russian Social-Democrats "...to exert every effort for the utmost consolidation of the Party, to draw up a Party programme and revive its official organ".²

Lenin's document became widely known in revolutionary circles. It helped to clarify the state of affairs within Russian Social-Democracy, reveal the causes of differences and unmasked the adherents of Economism. It indicated ways to unite and step up the activity of those who supported the idea of founding a Party which would adhere consistently to Marxist positions. Lenin himself considered "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats" to be a turning point in the development of Russian Social-Democracy, the beginning of a struggle for the triumph of revolutionary Marxism within it, of uniting its adherents into a revolutionary proletarian party.

The exiled Social-Democrats, headed by Lenin, based their appeal for a vigorous struggle against opportunism and its influence within the ranks of the RSDLP on real forces, as is borne out by the surge of activity observed among those groups and organisations which, at the turn of the century advocated the founding of a truly militant, revolutionary political party of the Russian proletariat. For instance, the editors of the Yekaterinoslav newspaper *Yuzhny Rabochi* (The Southern Worker), founded in January 1900, declared in their very first issue that the struggle against the government, "the endeavour to overthrow it and to win political rights is a vital task for the Russian working class, a task no less vital and urgent than that of securing a shorter working day and higher wages". The newspaper observed that the local RSDLP Committee's switch from purely economic to political propaganda was connected with the workers' dissatisfaction with the former orientation in work, and the increasingly pronounced political character of the working-class movement in Russia.

In March 1900, members of the Rabocheye Znamya group (a Social-Democratic group organised in St. Petersburg as early as 1897), who evaded arrest, published their second issue where, contrary to *Rabochaya Mysl*, they insisted that political struggle against the autocratic government should be the main task of the Russian working-class movement.

Another group, the Social-Democratic Workers' Library, was founded in St. Petersburg in the summer of 1900 with the aim of publishing popular pamphlets intended for workers and devoted to political issues. The pamphlets published by this group were sub-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 175.

² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

sequently characterised by *Iskra* as a manifestation of the Social-Democrats' discontent with the dominating Economic trend, of both the overt variety, represented by *Rabochaya Mysl*, and the covert one, represented by *Rabocheye Dyelo*.

Nonetheless, the strengthening of revolutionary tendencies in the Russian Social-Democratic movement did not mean adopting revolutionary positions. First, the forces were not yet equal: "The Economists still set the tone in the majority of local organisations".¹ Secondly, the worship of the spontaneity in the working-class movement in any of its forms could not be overcome spontaneously, without vigorous efforts by the advocates of the idea of turning Social-Democracy into the vanguard of the working-class movement. For this reason, Lenin resolutely opposed all attempts to impose Economism and Bernsteinism upon the Russian working-class movement as its dominant ideology and persistently sought for new ways of enhancing the influence of revolutionary Marxists upon Social-Democracy's activities.

In late 1899, still in exile, Lenin elaborated a programme to step up the struggle for transforming the RSDLP into a militant proletarian party, basing its activities on the principles of scientific socialism.²

In his articles "Our Programme", "Our Immediate Task", and "An Urgent Question" Lenin set the Russian Social-Democrats a clear-cut objective: to safeguard Marx's teaching against all manner of distortion and vulgarisation and constantly, thoroughly and *independently* develop it with due accord for the Russian context. He wrote: "There can be no strong socialist party without a revolutionary theory."³ In Lenin's articles, much space is given to the main questions of the revolutionary theory and practice: the correlation between the economic and political struggle of the working class, the prerequisites for establishing its hegemony in the liberation movement of the masses in Russia, the correlation between the spontaneous and the conscious elements in the working-class movement, and the need for merging scientific socialism with the working-class movement.

Lenin stressed that in order to solve these problems in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism the corresponding tactical and organisational principles of a revolutionary party must be adopted. He emphasised that "without improved organisation there can be no progress of our working-class movement in general".⁴ In his view, "the

¹ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, p. 290.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 193-296.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Our Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 211.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "An Urgent Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 222.

founding of a Party organ that will appear regularly and be closely connected with all the local groups",¹ should be considered the most important part of the work of a party organisation. It was essential to publish and distribute an all-Party organ, primarily because without such an organ Social-Democracy could never free itself of "amateurism", a tendency to conduct all affairs solely on the basis of personal contacts (characteristic of sectarian groups) and an unwarranted waste of revolutionary forces. Only a regular revolutionary Marxist newspaper capable of extending its influence on and connected with all spheres of Party activity could unite the Russian Social-Democratic movement. This was a fundamentally new approach to the ways and means of structuring a united Party.

Even a well-organised all-Party newspaper run by Marxists, however, could not in itself ensure the ideological unity of Russian Social-Democracy on a revolutionary theoretical platform. To achieve this aim, a consistently Marxist Party programme was needed. Lenin substantiated this idea in his article "A Draft Programme of Our Party". He maintained that a programme was indispensable in restoring genuine Party unity: it "must formulate our basic views; precisely establish our immediate political tasks; point out the immediate demands that must show the area of agitational activity; give unity to the agitational work, expand and deepen it...²". Until then, "The Second Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democrats", drawn up by Plekhanov, first published in 1888 and reprinted in 1898, had in fact been the only programme document of Russian Social-Democracy with a comparatively wide circulation among its organisations. Lenin made use of all that had not yet become obsolete in this document in the fifteen years of its existence. Nonetheless, the draft programme he elaborated was an entirely new document in both its structure and its formulation of the majority of fundamental propositions and practical demands.

Working on the "Draft Programme of Our Party" Lenin deemed it necessary to draw on the experience of the Socialist parties in other countries as well since as he put it, "... in Russia we see the same *basic* processes of the development of capitalism, the same *basic* tasks for the socialists and the working class...".³ At the same time Lenin pointed out that the use of the West European experience should not "...lead to our forgetting the *specific features* of Russia which must find *full expression* in the specific features of our programme",⁴ i.e.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Our Immediate Task", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 218.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 230.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁴ *Ibid.*

the detailed substantiation of the practical demands of Russian Social-Democracy.

The well nigh four years of arduous study and theoretical work (including the work on his book *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*) that had passed since the drafting of the first Party programme (1899) enabled Lenin to specify and expand the formulation of many of its theoretical propositions and practical demands, particularly the last section of the Draft Programme devoted to demands with respect to the peasant question. These demands were expressed in a detailed, comprehensive manner.¹ The other sections were couched in the form of general recommendations.

In the last months of 1899 and the beginning of 1900 Lenin wrote a number of other works, most of them devoted to exposing the essence of Economism.

The article "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", for example, sharply criticised the "Supplement to *Rabochaya Mysl*" published in September 1899, which was described by Lenin as the most consistent expression of the Economists' ideas.² The same goal was pursued in Lenin's strongly-worded statement "Apropos of the *Profession de foi*"³. The document attacked in the article was drawn up by the Kiev RSDLP Committee and reflected the spread of Economism in the Social-Democratic ranks. Equally devastating was Lenin's review of "The Working-Class Movement in the West. A Critical Study. Vol. I. Germany. Belgium"⁴, a book by S. N. Prokopovich, one of the leaders of Russian revisionism. Lenin's indignation at the revisionists is also expressed in his review of a book by Karl Kautsky, "Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Programme. Anticriticism".⁵ The article "On Strikes" offers a probing analysis of the place of economic strikes in the struggle of the working-class for emancipation; Lenin notes both their significance and their limitations.⁶ The article "Factory Courts" is, in essence, a detailed commentary on one of the planks of the Draft Party Programme elaborated by Lenin.⁷

This list is sufficient evidence of Lenin's vigorous activity in the name of the unity of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, the for-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 245.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 255-85.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Apropos of the *Profession de foi*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 286-96.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Review. S. N. Prokopovich. *The Working-Class Movement in the West*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 183-92.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Review. Karl Kautsky. *Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm. Eine Antikritik*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 193-203.

⁶ V. I. Lenin, "On Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 310-19.

⁷ V. I. Lenin, "Factory Courts", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 297-309.

mation of a truly Marxist, militant party. Admittedly, since Lenin was not able to publish these works at that time, they could not have had any direct effect upon the process of creating such a party. Nonetheless, his elaboration of a programme of action required for the restoration of the ideological, political and organisational unity of the RSDLP, his elaboration of numerous theoretical problems concerning the working-class movement and substantiation of a plan for rallying Party forces with the help of a Party organ—all served as a kind of a prologue to the establishment of *Iskra* as a centre for rallying the revolutionary Social-Democrats and uniting them into a proletarian party of a new type, namely, the Bolshevik Party.

Lenin mobilised all his strength and abilities and all his contacts in the Social-Democratic organisations and the circles of intellectual Marxist sympathisers in order to materialise his plan for attaining the ideological and organisational unity of the RSDLP through an all-Russia workers' political newspaper. Preliminary steps were taken when he was still in exile. As soon as the term of his exile expired at the end of January 1900, Lenin returned to the European part of Russia and then, in July, he went abroad to tackle the task of setting up a newspaper to be called, most symbolically, *Iskra* (The Spark) with redoubled energy.

The difficulties encountered were enormous, ranging from repressions and the lack of funds for publishing the newspaper abroad to the absence of reliable bases in the major centres of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia. Additional obstacles were created by the conflict with Plekhanov, which was provoked by the latter's tactlessness and very nearly split the founders of *Iskra* and the Emancipation of Labour group, without the support of which it would have been difficult to launch the newspaper. Nevertheless, the inexhaustible energy of Lenin, who placed the interests of the revolutionary working-class movement and the struggle for socialism above all else, made it possible to surmount these difficulties. The required minimum funds were raised, contacts with local organisations and individual Social-Democrats were established. Arrangements were made, via the German Social-Democrats, to set up presses in Munich and, temporarily, in Leipzig. Finally, the problem of collaboration with the Emancipation of Labour group was also settled.

The newspaper's programme was laid down in the "Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*"¹ published in October 1900. In setting forth the task facing the newspaper, *Iskra*'s editors proceeded from an analysis of the complicated and in many respects controversial situation in the Russian Social-Democratic movement of the time.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*". *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 351-56.

The Declaration pointed out that the situation was marked by the spread of the movement and the growing awareness of the necessity "for consolidating its positions, acquiring a definite character and organisation", on the one hand, and by factionalism, ideological vacillation, the spread of Economism, and the striving to "keep the movement at its lowest stage of development..., to relegate the task of setting up a revolutionary party to the background", on the other. In practical terms, this analysis highlighted the goal of uniting the Social-Democrats in order to form "a strong party fighting under the common banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy".

While many concurred with this conclusion, the majority of the Social-Democrats were inclined to follow a "simpler" path, that of convening the second RSDLP Congress and attempting to use it as a forum for settling all pressing problems. To this project *Iskra's* editorial board counterposed its own programme for achieving "firm ideological unity", inconceivable without first dissociating from opponents of Marxism in the Social-Democratic movement. *Iskra* entered the Russian and international working-class movement under Lenin's famous slogan: "Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation."¹

This slogan clearly specified the chief orientation of Lenin's *Iskra*. The foundation for it had been laid in "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats" and the articles written by Lenin at the end of 1899. It underlies the "Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra* and *Zarya*" which had been drawn up even before he left the country at the end of March or the beginning of April 1900.² Lenin was convinced that without drawing lines of demarcation, "unity will be purely fictitious, it will conceal the prevailing confusion and hinder its radical elimination".³

Consistent adherence to Marxism, the development of some aspects of Marx's revolutionary teaching in conformity with the requirements of the working-class movement and the changed situation, and protection of Marxist theory from all attempts to revise it in the spirit of the "latest" schools of bourgeois philosophy, political economy, and sociology—such were the principles that guided the theoretical work of *Iskra's* editors in both the newspaper itself and its scientific and political supplement, the journal *Zarya*.

This was to become the foundation upon which, a few years later,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*", *Collected Works* Vol. 4, p. 354.

² V. I. Lenin, "Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra* and *Zarya*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 320-30.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 354.

the edifice of Bolshevism as a political party and a trend in social thought was erected.

The comprehensiveness and the thoroughness of the programme of action with which *Iskra*'s editorial board set about publishing the newspaper was one of the most important factors in guarding the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy. While the conditions and the forms of the working-class struggle, the immediate practical tasks facing the Russian Social-Democrats, the concrete targets of criticism against the opponents of Marxism changed more than once, the general direction of Lenin's *Iskra*, the principles underlying the struggle for the Party, remained identical to those formulated in 1900.

ISKRA—A RALLYING POINT FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES IN THE RUSSIAN WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

Exactly as Lenin had foreseen, the all-Russia workers' political newspaper infused the Social Democratic movement with an entirely new spirit and substantially changed the alignment of forces within it, lending a different character to the confrontation of the revolutionary and opportunist trends. The truly Marxist forces of the RSDLP began to rally around *Iskra*, and their organisation began to form; *Iskra*'s editors took upon themselves the responsibility of elaborating the Party's programme and tactical lines of work among the masses. As a result of all this, the tendency for turning the RSDLP into a militant political vanguard of the Russian working class gained more and more ground, determining to an ever greater extent the over-all direction of the development of Russian Social-Democracy.

The content of the very first issue of *Iskra*, published in December 1900, made it clear that the publishers of the newspaper were determined to run it as an organ of a political party of the working class. The selection of material was indicative of the broad approach of *Iskra*'s editors to the problems of the working-class movement.

Lenin's article "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement" was chosen for the leader of *Iskra*'s first issue. It stressed the enormous importance of political activity as the main direction of the proletariat's struggle for the complete emancipation of all the exploited and working people and that this struggle could be led only by revolutionary Social-Democrats united in a political party of the working class. Moreover, the article clearly formulated the principal task of *Iskra* itself: to elaborate the items of the programme, the ideological and organisational principles, the strategy and tactics of the RSDLP.¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 366-71.

Other articles in the issue were devoted to the urgent problems of the international working-class and Social-Democratic movements, to the exposure of the autocratic police "justice", to the unmasking of the anti-people nature of the tsarist foreign policy (in Lenin's article "War in China").

The first issue of *Iskra* provided extensive information on the state of affairs in the Russian working-class movement and on the condition of the workers (reports from St. Petersburg, the Moscow Gubernia, Kharkov, Yekaterinburg, Nizhni Novgorod, Odessa, and Nikolayev, published under the general heading "The Chronicle of the Working-Class Movement and Letters from Factories and Plants"), on the growing discontent in all sections of Russia's population (six reports under the heading "From Our Social Life"), on the most significant events in the life of Russian Social-Democracy (Lenin's paragraph "Split in the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad" and information on the leaflet received by *Iskra* and containing the text of the "Programme of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class" and the "Rules of the United Workers' Organisation").

In each of its subsequent issues, along with articles elucidating the main principles of the RSDLP Programme and tactics, *Iskra* published letters from its readers, information, and the texts of leaflets and appeals issued by local committees. This kind of make-up helped *Iskra* gain an increasingly wide readership, promoted the spread of revolutionary ideas in all sections of the working class and the growth of the RSDLP's prestige among the non-proletarian sections of Russia's population opposed to tsarism.

Among the material published by *Iskra*, of greatest value were the articles, reports and documents showing the role of the working class and its party in the struggle against autocracy, against all forms of oppression and exploitation in general, i.e., publications dealing with the transformation of the working class into the dominant force in the general democratic movement and the imminent democratic revolution. Of great importance were also publications on the development of Social-Democracy: the rallying of its forces, its transformation into the political leader of the working class, the elaboration of its revolutionary strategy and tactics.

At a time when a socialist revolution became the practical prospect for the international working-class movement, the search for new forms of class struggle became one of the most acute tactical problems for the proletariat. The experience accumulated by the Russian working-class movement enabled *Iskra*'s editors to raise the problem of turning political strikes (like the famous "Obukhov Defence" in 1901) and street demonstrations (as, for example, the one that took place in Kharkov in May 1900) into an effective weapon for the work-

ing class, into a means for its political alliance with other strata of the working people. "Thanks to *Iskra*, Russian Social-Democracy became the first party in the international working-class movement to concentrate its attention and efforts on the development of the mass means of revolutionary struggle: political strikes and demonstrations."¹

For the first time in the history of the working-class movement, *Iskra* tackled many problems related to the proletariat's allies in the struggle for democracy and socialism, above all, the problem of the revolutionary spirit of the peasantry, the most numerous of the social groups constituting the non-proletarian strata of the working people. Under what conditions can the peasants, if they can at all, join actively in the revolutionary process on the side of the proletariat? This question could not but preoccupy the advanced representatives of the working class of Russia, a country where the peasantry, the most oppressed class, accounted for the majority of the population. *Iskra* gave a well-grounded answer to this question in its third issue, in Lenin's article "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry".²

The analysis of the state of affairs in the Russian countryside at the turn of the century offered in V. I. Lenin's fundamental work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* as well as in his other writings of the 1890's revealed increasingly pronounced traits of rural capitalist development; however, the peasants' conditions were still above all determined by the vestiges of serfdom, by the landlords' oppression. That is why, as Lenin put it, "the antagonism between the peasantry as a whole and the landlord class as a whole ... [had] the most vital and most practical significance for Russian Social-Democrats...".³ It was the duty of Social-Democrats to promote in every way the peasants' struggle against vestiges of serfdom, the landlords, because a party "aspiring to the role of a vanguard fighter for freedom", cannot remain neutral on an issue of a national importance. Lenin wrote that to accomplish this task, the programme of the Social-Democrats and their agitation among the peasantry "must be steadily directed towards widening the outlook of the peasants, towards developing their political consciousness".⁴ Social-Democracy should strive to turn the peasants into an active force in the struggle for the overthrow of autocracy, to make them realise that the working class was the most consistent champion of the peasants' interests in the struggle against the vestiges of serfdom and capitalist exploitation.

¹ M. S. Volin, *Lenin's "Iskra", 1900-1903*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1964, p. 77 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 420-28.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

Iskra gave wide coverage to this problem by publishing reports on the living conditions and the signs of incipient awakening of the peasantry, and discussing the principles of the agrarian programme of Russian Social-Democracy on its pages. All the material published developed the ideas propounded in Lenin's article.

Briefly, the newspaper raised the urgent problems of socio-political life, provided answers to them, and promptly responded to all developments affecting the vital interests of the working class and the working masses as a whole.

It was indeed natural for *Iskra* to give a great deal of attention to the role of Social-Democracy as the revolutionary vanguard of the working-class movement. Proceeding from the Marxist understanding of the correlation between the spontaneous and the conscious elements in the working-class movement, *Iskra* repeatedly emphasised that Russian Social-Democracy was called upon "to imbue the masses of the proletariat with the ideas of socialism and political consciousness".¹ This problem was thoroughly elucidated in Lenin's article "A Talk with Defenders of Economism" (*Iskra*, No. 12, December 6, 1901),² written in response to "A Letter to Russian Social-Democratic Organs" by a group of Social-Democrats gravitating towards Economism.

Vigorous, class-conscious efforts of the working-class vanguard were one of the major factors in rallying the working class, helping it to realise its historical mission and ensuring success in the struggle for its class interests. Failure to understand that without such party activity the working-class movement could suffer considerable losses results either from the leadership's lagging behind the movement itself (which would be "but half the evil", as Lenin put it), or from a "general" lagging behind, i.e., from the worship of and subservience to spontaneity, and proclaiming them a special virtue. That is why Lenin's criticism was levelled against the entire Economist trend. He was convinced that in this context, one of the most urgent tasks for Russian Social-Democracy was to acquire a proper understanding of the Party's role and educate leaders of the mass working-class movement, who would be "sufficiently trained theoretically to be proof against all vacillations; with such a broad political outlook, such revolutionary energy and such organisational talent as to create a militant political party on the basis of the new movement".³

One of the major prerequisites for transforming Social-Democracy

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 368-69.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Talk with Defenders of Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 313-20.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 316-17.

into a militant political party was the understanding of the role it has to play in the working-class movement. Another prerequisite, especially important for the Russian Social-Democracy under the conditions prevailing in the early years of the twentieth century, consisted in determining the ways to achieve actual unity, to unite isolated circles and groups of Social-Democrats functioning under the aegis of the RSDLP, into a real party, consolidated both ideologically and organisationally. A detailed plan for organisationally rallying isolated Social-Democratic committees and groups by means of publishing an all-Russia newspaper was conceived by Lenin when he was still in exile. The plan started to be translated into reality step by step when *Iskra* began to be published and distributed in Russia and when the number of its correspondents and distributors grew, as did the network of its contacts with local Party committees and individual Social-Democratic groups. The plan had to be made known to all Party committees and organisations. When set forth in Lenin's article "Where to Begin" (*Iskra*, No. 4, May 1901)¹ it triggered a great deal of discussion among the Russian Social-Democrats.

Iskra's editorials on the questions of international Social-Democracy likewise served to educate the Russian Social-Democrats in a proletarian revolutionary spirit and to achieve the unity of the RSDLP on the platform of revolutionary Marxism. Practically all the most important events in the West-European working-class and Social-Democratic movements, all the major debates between the representatives of revolutionary Marxism and various opportunist trends were covered in the newspaper in one form or another. The articles and reports printed in *Iskra* and *Zarya* were in strict conformity with the norms of relations established in Marx and Engels time for workers' parties. Furthermore, *Iskrists* made no secret of their wholehearted support for the revolutionary wing of the Second International, as is evident from "On the Threshold of the Twentieth Century", the editorial article printed in the second issue of *Iskra* (February 1901). Written by G. V. Plekhanov, this editorial analyses the state of the working-class movement at the turn of the century. It compared the revolutionary and opportunist trends in the international Social-Democratic movement to the Jacobins and the Girondists of the French bourgeois revolution of the late eighteenth century. So notoriously opportunist were the Girondists that Plekhanov's analogy left no doubt as to *Iskra's* stand on this matter. It captured the essence of the differences and was later used by Lenin on many occasions, including the subsequent struggle against Plekhanov himself, when the latter abandoned the revolutionary

¹ V. I. Lenin. "Where to Begin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 17-24.

Bolshevik wing of Russian Social-Democracy in favour of the latter-day Girondists, the Mensheviks.

Each successive issue of *Iskra* extended its influence in the Social-Democratic organisations of Russia. Granted, many of these organisations influenced by the Economists, were at first unwilling to support, and, at times, even hostile to *Iskra*. Gradually, however, the ideas propounded by *Iskra* were accepted by the majority of the Social-Democrats, as reflected in their leaflets, appeals, and other documents of the local committees of the RSDLP. In effect many committees had been won over to *Iskra*'s side; many had started to act in the *Iskra* fashion long before they formally recognised its authority.

Another important indicator of *Iskra*'s consolidated position in the Social-Democratic movement was the creation of an entire network of agents responsible for a wide variety of functions, ranging from drawing up mailing lists to establishing contacts with local committees and organisations. Despite police persecution, the seizure of shipments of political literature, and the arrest of its carriers, *Iskra*'s role and authority continued to grow. This process became more thorough and gained a firmer foundation in January 1902, when the Iskristis in Russia organised the Russian *Iskra* Organisation.

As *Iskra* penetrated deeper and deeper into local Social-Democratic organisations, as its influence grew, as more and more leading militants in the Russian working-class movement adopted its programmatic, tactical and organisational principles, it became more urgent to provide an elaborate theoretical and ideological basis for these principles. Lenin was the first to realise that a comprehensive plan for setting up an organisation of the Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats was badly needed. As early as the spring of 1901, he wrote of his intention to outline such a plan in the brochure he was then preparing for the press.¹ The work in question was the book *What Is to Be Done?* upon which Lenin began serious work in November 1901.

At that time, Russian and, especially foreign Economists, who sought to check the growing influence of *Iskra*, became particularly active. *Rabocheye Dyelo* and similar publications loosed a veritable stream of invectives against *Iskra*, the "usurper" striving to establish its dictatorship in the party ranks. They hypocritically camouflaged these charges by allegations that Economism had already outlived itself, that all the Social-Democrats were in favour of intensifying the political struggle against the autocracy and that party unity was the greatest concern of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and its supporters. The practical steps taken by the Economists in the Union of Russian Social-Democrats abroad to convene the second Party Congress proved especially dangerous.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Where to Begin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 20.

"And now a few words about our allies", wrote N. K. Krupskaya, then the secretary of *Iskra's* editorial board on December 14 (1), 1901, to A. I. Zakharova, *Iskra's* representative in Odessa. "As it turns out, these gentlemen are plotting a congress to be held in the near future and attended by representatives of the major committees and the organisations abroad. They, apparently, intend to inform us at the last moment. We suggest the following tactics for those on our side, namely, to demand that the congress be postponed at least until spring. *Iskra* plans to have its pamphlet brought out for the new year, which will examine the roots of the differences on organisational issues. Convening a congress before the appearance of this pamphlet in print is tantamount to wanting to decide the issue without hearing the arguments of both parties involved."¹

In Lenin's opinion, it was most important to give *Iskra's* supporters in Russia an advance notice of the major questions examined in *What Is to Be Done?* In November of 1901, in the preface to a collection of documents on the so-called "unity" congress of Social-Democratic organisations abroad,² Lenin noted that the editors were "preparing a special pamphlet on the urgent questions of our movement, to be published in the near future".³

The issues to be raised in *What Is to Be Done?* were set forth in the many letters sent to *Iskra's* agents in Russia. For example, N. K. Krupskaya wrote to Vakar and Podolyanin, *Iskra's* correspondents in Kiev: "We shall develop our view on the role of an all-Russia organ in a pamphlet which will soon be published. It will give a comprehensive idea of *Iskra's* viewpoint on organisational questions and will, moreover, sufficiently explain why *Iskra* was not able to join *Rabocheye Dyelo*."⁴ In January of 1902 a letter to Russia said: "*Iskra's* organisational plan will be developed in detail. Nowadays, the word 'organisation' is on the lips of all sincere people, and we must discuss this issue properly."⁵

In this way, the Iskristes and Social-Democrats in Russia were given an advance notice of a book that would serve as manual and guide

¹ *Correspondence between V. I. Lenin, Iskra's Editorial Board and the Social-Democratic Organisations in Russia. 1900-1903. Collection of Documents in Three Volumes.* (Below referred to as *Correspondence*) Vol. 1, Moscow, 1969, pp. 339-40 (in Russian).

² At this congress, held in Zurich in October 1901, an attempt was made to unite all Russian Social-Democratic organisations active abroad. The attempt failed, specifically, due to the refusal of the leaders of the Union of the Russian Social-Democrats to denounce opportunism in all its manifestations (namely, Economism, Bernsteinism, Millerandism, etc.)

³ V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Pamphlet *Documents of the 'Unity' Conference*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 305.

⁴ *Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 354-55.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 389-90.

in the struggle to rally the RSDLP around a revolutionary Marxist platform as quickly as possible. They looked forward to it, and were not deceived in their expectations. Though work on the book did not progress as rapidly as expected, it was finished in February of 1902.

On March 10, *Iskra* published an announcement of the appearance of *What Is to Be Done?* The work gave a profound analysis of practically all the burning issues in the Russian revolutionary working-class movement. Lenin refuted the positions taken by the Economists on "all our basic points of difference".¹ It is only natural that this secured the book a wide readership and support, primarily from Russian Social-Democrats. At the same time, Lenin raised and elucidated problems which were of fundamental significance to the international proletariat as a whole, bringing *What Is to Be Done?* to the attention of readers outside Russia as well.

At the very beginning of this new stage in the international working-class movement, Lenin clearly pointed to the need for overcoming opportunism of all shades and trends; be it German Bernsteinism, French Millerandism, English trade-unionism, or Russian Economism. To the opportunist platform of Bernsteinism, both Russian and non-Russian, which limited the working-class party's functions to those of a passive appendage of the working-class movement, he contrasted his theory of a party as a revolutionising, guiding and organising force in the proletarian struggle against exploitation and oppression, for a new, socialist society.

The *sine qua non* for a proletarian party, according to Marxism developed further in *What Is to Be Done?*, is the constant creative elaboration of the theory of the revolutionary working-class movement. Continual theoretical work and scientific analysis of the phenomena of social life is a most important form of the proletarian struggle for reorganisation of social relations. "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement", . . . "the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory"²—these Leninist principles, derived from a profound analysis of the problems facing Russian Social-Democracy and a study of the experience of other countries, have become part and parcel of the theoretical arsenal of the revolutionary forces in the international working-class movement.

Only through mastering the theory of scientific socialism can a revolutionary proletarian party formulate its programmatic propositions and practical slogans of struggle on a sound basis. Otherwise it is doomed to following passively the spontaneously developing

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 350.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 369-370.

working-class movement. Indeed, "...all worship of the spontaneity of the working-class movement, all belittling of the role of the 'conscious element', of the role of Social-Democracy, means, quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers".¹

This was in itself an answer to the accusation of *Iskra* by *Rabocheye Dyelo* to the effect that the former allegedly belittled the significance of "the objective or spontaneous element of development". Such charges, wrote Lenin, reflected... "the quintessence of the present-day theoretical and political differences that exist among Russian Social-Democrats".² It is therefore only natural that Lenin's analysis should focus on the Marxist conception of the problem of the correlation between the spontaneous and the conscious elements in the working-class movement.

The idea that the working class will spontaneously embrace socialism derived from those vulgar sociological notions of the course of social development which were widely circulated in the working-class movement. Yet, in the capitalist system, socialist ideology of the proletariat is elaborated in conditions of a direct conflict among various trends in the working-class movement, under the influence of bourgeois ideology and all kind of petty-bourgeois influences.

On the one hand, Lenin said, "socialist theory reveals the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory", and in this sense it "spontaneously gravitates towards socialism". On the other hand, "most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree".³

In a bourgeois society, under the influence of the bourgeois ideology, the working class spontaneously develops above all and primarily trade-unionist forms of consciousness and struggle (i.e., those forms which do not extend beyond the framework of that society or ideology). To all intents and purposes, they provide exclusively for self-defence, ignoring, in fact, the question of overthrowing the domination of the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary transition to a new social order. For this reason, the revolutionary Marxist party must introduce elements of socialist consciousness into the spontaneous working-class movement, guide it onto the road which leads to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie's domination and to establishing the power of the proletariat. Any other formulation of the question is tantamount to "renouncing socialism".⁴

¹ Ibid., pp. 382-83.

² Ibid., p. 374.

³ Ibid., p. 386 (note).

⁴ Ibid., p. 385.

A socialist consciousness can only be a result of profound scientific knowledge. The prerequisite for a successful struggle against the capitalist system lies in the merger of the working-class movement with a socialist consciousness based on a scientific foundation. The revolutionary Marxist party of the working class which intends to lead this class in an assault on the mainstays of capitalist society must work towards achieving an organic synthesis of the working-class movement and socialist ideology. In Lenin's view, it was vitally important to be aware of this task.

The increasing scope of spontaneous protest by the workers against the conditions of their existence in capitalist society, a protest resulting from and reproduced by direct economic needs of the working class, does not in itself lead to a truly socialist movement. Spontaneous manifestations of discontent, of whatever scope, can never lead to the realisation of the irreconcilable conflict between the vital interests of the working class and those of the capitalists (or of all exploiting classes in general), i.e., it cannot lead to socialist consciousness. Thus, the more massive the spontaneous protest of the working class against its position in bourgeois society, the greater the responsibility of the working-class vanguard for developing the elements of consciousness, an understanding of the root causes of the exploitation and oppression suffered by the working masses, and for introducing them into the working-class movement.

What Is to Be Done? thoroughly elaborated the ideological and political principles to be embodied by a new type of a workers' party. The focal point of the proletariat's class struggle, explained Lenin, lies in the sphere of politics, "...the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes".¹ Only through taking part in political life can one obtain the necessary idea of the direction and end goal of the struggle. If the working-class movement is to acquire a revolutionary character and to be spearheaded against the very foundation of the bourgeois system, it must be active in that sphere; this is an indispensable condition. For this very reason "...the theoretical work of Social-Democrats should aim at studying all the specific features of the social and political condition of the various classes".² The results obtained through such study should become the property of the working-class movement, serving as its guides in various forms of political struggle. The most important function incumbent upon the revolutionary Marxist party of the working class is not to adapt itself to the undeveloped political consciousness of the working masses, but rather to develop this consciousness, to raise

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 422.

² *Ibid.*, p. 425.

it to an understanding of the class tasks and the role played by the proletariat in the struggle of the masses for liberation.

The party can and must fulfil this task insofar as it "...represents the working class, not in its relation to a given group of employers alone, but in its relation to all classes of modern society and to the state as an organised political force".¹ The party must fulfil this goal throughout all stages of the working-class movement, since acquiring this or that degree of political freedom in a bourgeois society "...does not in any way eliminate" but "merely shifts somewhat"² the sphere of the political work of the Marxist party of the working class, the sphere of the political education of the workers and all strata of the working people. The Social-Democrats must carry on their work "on the basis ... of all manifestations in general of public and political life".³ They can and must attach primary importance to this aspect of their activity also because the struggle for socialism organically incorporates the struggle for democracy.

In the specific conditions obtaining in tsarist Russia, the immediate political goals of the working-class movement and all progressive social trends were concentrated on the struggle against the autocracy. For this reason, wrote Lenin, "...we shall not be fulfilling our task of developing the political consciousness of the workers if we do not undertake the organisation of the *political exposure* of the autocracy in all its aspects...".⁴ The Russian Social-Democrats could head the struggle against the tsarist autocracy, the struggle considered by Lenin to be the most revolutionary of all the tasks then facing the international working-class movement, only provided it became a militant Marxist party of the working class, a genuinely revolutionary proletarian vanguard.

What Is to Be Done? was of enormous significance because it developed and substantiated the theory of the organisational structure of a new type of proletarian party. According to Lenin, one of the main principles in such a party should be democratic centralism. Such a party could not function without firm, militant and efficient leadership, without the strict coordination of actions by all its component parts. And this could only be achieved through centralisation, through strict discipline binding on all members of the party.

Its amateurism restricted the Russian Social-Democrats to a narrow trade-unionism and kept it off the main road of the proletarian struggle for socialism, the ultimate goal of the working-class movement. Meanwhile, the upsurge in the mass struggle of the proletariat at the beginning of this century, and the even greater scale it prom-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 400.

² *Ibid.*, p. 412.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

ised, demanded the creation of a new party based on a centralised organisation of professional revolutionaries united by a common idea, common tactics and common practical goals. "...The spontaneous struggle of the proletariat," stressed Lenin, "will not become its genuine 'class struggle' until this struggle is led by a strong organisation of revolutionaries."¹

In connection with the elaboration of the principles on which the party of a new type is to be founded *What Is to Be Done?* discussed the problem of forming its leadership, a group of authoritative, experienced party workers well-grounded in theory, and their interrelations with the mass of party members. Referring to the experience of the German Social-Democrats, Lenin observed that "...without the 'dozen' tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience, and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle".² Lenin protested against the demagoguery of contraposing the masses to their leaders. It is "the height of political tactlessness", he wrote, to appeal "from the leaders in general to the 'masses'", instead of appealing "from bad leaders to good leaders".³

Lenin pointed out that the implementation of the organisational principles of the working-class party was dependent to a large extent on the success achieved in the training of a large number of worker revolutionaries "who will be on the same level *in regard to Party activity* as the revolutionaries from amongst the intellectuals...".⁴ Lenin stressed that "attention, therefore, must be devoted *principally* to *raising* the workers to the level of revolutionaries; it is not at all our task to *descend* to the level of the 'working masses' as the Economists wish to do, or to the level of the 'average worker', as *Svoboda* desires to do...".⁵

One of the most important aspects of Lenin's teaching on the workers' party of a new type was and remains the question of its relationship with the working-class movement as a whole, the question of the party's role vis-à-vis other proletarian organisations. The question is thoroughly examined in *What Is to Be Done?*, in the section which discussed the specific features of an organisation of professional revolutionaries, and its distinctions from the masses involved in the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 475.

² Ibid., p. 461.

³ Ibid., p. 461.

⁴ Ibid., p. 470.

⁵ Ibid. The reference is to *Svoboda*, a "revolutionary-socialist" group classified by Lenin as one of those "small and rootless groups" in the Russian Social-Democratic movement which "...had no stable or serious principles, programme, tactics, organisation, and no roots among the masses..." (V. I. Lenin, "Adventurism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 356, 357).

movement.¹ The more people spontaneously drawn into the struggle, forming the basis of the movement and participating in it, noted Lenin, the greater the need for such an organisation. This organisation must maintain the stability and continuity of the movement, it must express the general interests of the working class, determine the direction and methods of the proletariat's struggle for its immediate and ultimate goals.

Such an organisation cannot and should not confine itself to "purely workers'" interests, because, when properly understood, the interests of the proletariat reflect the general and basic interests of all toiling and exploited people, who therefore can and must be drawn into the proletarian struggle. This is a most important duty for the revolutionary proletarian party.

The practical plan for founding a new type of militant, Marxist party not only reflected the tasks of the proletarian struggle in the specific conditions of tsarist Russia. The very methodology used in tackling these problems and the vital conclusions drawn in *What Is to Be Done?* were of paramount importance. Lenin's book evoked such broad international response because its conclusions were based not only on the analysis of the successes and failures in the Russian working people's liberation struggle, but also on the experience of the working-class and Social-Democratic movements in other countries, primarily Germany. The Russian Social-Democrats, Lenin held, ought to be able "... to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently".² It is on this principle that the book *What Is to Be Done?* is grounded. Thus, while wholeheartedly approving the tactics adopted by the German Social-Democrats at the time of the Exceptional Law against Socialists, and commending their ability to combine the legal and illegal forms of struggle, to oppose both the leftist and right-wing opportunists in following these tactics, Lenin censured their "tactfulness" in dealing with Bernstein's attempts to revise the fundamental propositions of the theory of the revolutionary working-class movement, and recalled that Engels had been resolute and uncompromising in criticising Dühring's vulgar outlook which had done so much harm to the German working-class movement.³ This approach to defining the goals of the Russian Social-Democrats made Lenin's conclusions most convincing for those to whom *What Is to Be Done?* was directly addressed. It also facilitated the assimilation of the ideas propounded in the book by the adherents of the Leninist orientation in the international working-class movement. From its first chapters to its closing lines, *What Is to Be Done?* car-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 464.

² Ibid., p. 370.

³ Ibid., pp. 358, 392.

ries the conviction that a new period was incipient in the history of the Russian working-class movement which would lead to "the consolidation of militant Marxism" and to bringing "the genuine vanguard of the most revolutionary class" to the fore.¹

Printed, as were most illegal publications abroad, on very thin paper and in a format convenient for easy transportation, Lenin's book gradually spread throughout the length and breadth of Russia to local committees and Social-Democratic groups and organisations, to workers' study circles and the strata of intelligentsia sympathetic to the revolutionary movement.² The book was found on Social-Democrats searched and arrested in Kiev and Moscow, in St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgorod, in Kazan, Odessa and many other cities. On March 21 (April 3), 1902, i.e., approximately two weeks after the publication of *What Is to Be Done?*, *Iskra* agent in Poltava M. A. Silvin, wrote the editorial board as follows: "We have left four copies of *What Is to Be Done?* with 2a3b and Kolya, three with Semyon Semyonovich, one with Oryol, one here, and we sent the rest with Victor to the Volga and the Urals, to the Old Lady."³

For many Russian Social-Democrats it was enough to open Lenin's book to become convinced that they had an outstanding work of creative Marxism before them. To his report on the book's distribution Silvin added an impassioned comment: "It is a tremendous success."⁴ Shortly afterwards he wrote from Kiev: "There are no copies of *What Is to Be Done?* left in the South; it is enormous success in the North."⁵

I. I. Radchenko, another *Iskra* agent, who did much to unite *Iskra*'s supporters in Russia and was active in the preparations for the Second RSDLP Congress wrote the *Iskra* editorial board from St. Petersburg on May 8 (21), 1902, requesting them to send him more copies of *What Is to Be Done?* since it was greatly needed. "This brochure has provoked a remarkable evolution. I have myself seen how the whirlwind of confusion has subsided for many; the school-girl sensitivity has gone, and they have confessed wholeheartedly to their errors and wandering in the dark."⁶

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 519, 520.

² Lenin's book "What Is to Be Done?" and Local Party Organisations in Russia. 1900-1903.", Perm, 1970 (in Russian).

³ *Correspondence*, Vol. 1, p. 460. In conspiratorial correspondence, 2a3b stood for P. N. Lepeshinsky, Pskov *Iskra* agent; Kolya for the St. Petersburg RSDLP Committee; Semyon Semyonovich, for the North-Russian Workers' Union; Victor, for F. I. Dan; The Old Lady (Starukha), for the Moscow RSDLP Committee.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 488.

⁶ Ibid., p. 531.

What Is to Be Done? attracted "especially those who stood closest to the Russian scene",¹ reminisced N. K. Krupskaya. Z. P. Krzhizhanovskaya, secretary of the Bureau of the *Iskra* Russian Organisation located in Samara, wrote the editors on May 25 (June 7), 1902, as follows: "So far *What Is to Be Done?* has received only laudatory comments."² Early in July, the editors of *Iskra* received word that the Moscow Committee of the RSDLP had expressed its "sincere gratitude to Comrade Lenin for *What Is to Be Done?*"³ In August of 1902, F. I. Shchekoldin wrote that the North-Russian Workers' Union supported *Iskra's* organisational principles "as outlined in Lenin's brochure".⁴ A similar response came from the Orel Committee of the RSDLP. *What Is to Be Done?* was definitely instrumental in evolving the views of the Social-Democrats working in the Siberian Union as regards the organisational principles of the Party; they adopted the idea of centralism.⁵

The St. Petersburg Committee, traditionally a body of great authority in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, adopted *Iskra's* stand to a great extent under the influence of *What Is to Be Done?*. As early as mid-June 1902, I. I. Radchenko notified the editors of *Iskra* that the St. Petersburg Committee did not have any differences of principle with *Iskra* and that it was ready to implement Lenin's plan for building a party.⁶

In July of the same year, the St. Petersburg Committee issued an appeal to all Russian Social-Democratic organisations stressing the necessity to put an end to the period of amateurism, local factionalism, organisational chaos and programmatic disagreement. The St. Petersburg Committee officially expressed its solidarity with "the theoretical and tactical views and organisational ideas of *Iskra* and *Zarya* which it recognises as the leading organs of the Russian Social-Democrats".⁷

"*What Is to Be Done?*," Vorovsky wrote many years later, "was the handbook of every *Iskra*-ist."⁸ P. N. Lepeshinsky noted that if the *Iskra* trend gained universal preponderance, "it was because the *Iskra* agents had *What Is to Be Done?* close at hand to unravel for them all the sophistry, all the confused verbiage, the true purport of the ideological casuistry of the followers of *Rabochaya Mysl*, *Svoboda*, and *Borba*, and the disciples of such new prophets as Martynov,

¹ N. K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Moscow, 1957, p. 52 (in Russian).

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1969, p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁵ *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, p. 677.

⁶ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 47.

⁷ *Iskra*, No. 26, October 15, 1902.

⁸ V. V. Vorovsky, *Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1932, p. 155 (in Russian).

Krichevsky and Co. Thanks to Lenin's book we had a ready and definitive answer ... to all objections and this had an enormous impact on the workers; it ensured their great respect for the *Iskra* trend."¹

At first the Economists were slow to understand what a powerful weapon *Iskra* had used against them. In the summer of 1902 N. K. Krupskaya informed *Iskra*'s Samara agent, L. M. Knipovich, that the members of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats functioning abroad were "behaving most foolishly: They keep harping that all the committees are on their side, that they will write 'their own' programme, and tear *What Is to Be Done?* to shreds".² Several months later, sharing her impressions of the state of affairs in the Social-Democratic organisations abroad, she wrote A. I. Piskunov, *Iskra*'s agent in Nizhny Novgorod: "*Rabocheye Dyelo* has withered completely."³

Noteworthy in this respect is the letter of resignation presented to the Union of Russian Social-Democrats on February 8, 1903, by V. P. Ivanshin, one of the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, in which he admits: "Lenin's book has raised the major programmatic and tactical questions concerning our movement and answers them in a way. It speaks of liquidating an entire period in our movement, the period of the "young" union... it has been and is widely read in Russia, it is studied by the Social-Democrats now active in Russia and it has wrought a drastic change in the minds of many of them...".⁴ Ivanshin goes on to say: "In general I consider this book to be a profoundly faithful reflection of our movement, of its flaws, and its immediate tasks."⁵ He stressed, moreover, that the Union and the editorial board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* had merely announced their disagreement with *Iskra*'s views as set forth in *What Is to Be Done?*, and then, in the course of the following six months at least, had not made "so much as a single peep on the essence of their disagreement".⁶ Ivanshin considered this a symptom of the impotence of these opportunist organisations, which had absolutely nothing with which to counter the ideas set forth in *What Is to Be Done?*

The outstanding, almost unparalleled success of *What Is to Be Done?* can be attributed not only to its virtues—the depth of the treatment of questions related to the revolutionary movement, the

¹ P. N. Lepeshinsky *At the Crossroads*, Moscow, 1955, . 140 (in Russian). *Borba*, a group founded in the summer of 1900 in Paris. Lenin classified it as belonging to the same category of "small and rootless groups" as *Svoboda* (see above).

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 63.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

⁴ Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, f. 283, op. 1 n, d. 27140, l. 17-18 (in Russian).

⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 18.

convincingness of its analysis, precise formulations, but also to the preparedness of the soil, the Russian revolutionary movement, in which its ideas were sown. "Lenin's brochure answers the mood, and people who vacillated are coming over to our side,"¹ Krupskaya noted in a letter dated July 21, 1902. It was especially attuned to those workers who were gravitating to political activity and wanted to do away with factionalism and confusion in the Party. Radchenko conveyed the spreading sentiments most accurately in his detailed description of a conversation with a group of St. Petersburg workers. "In this conversation," he wrote, "I was able to hear if not literal quotes, then passages identical in spirit to those in *What Is to Be Done?* ... I rejoiced for Lenin who, though so far away, could see what kind of people work in our shops, what they need, and what they are capable of. Believe me, dear friends, our own Bebels are just around the corner."²

Needless to say, not all Social-Democratic committees and groups accepted the ideas and conclusions laid down in *What Is to Be Done?* so readily. In some cases the parochial tradition was still very much in sway. And if Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* was a most prominent factor in effecting a radical change in the minds of many Russian Social-Democrats, inducing them to turn to the principles of revolutionary Marxism, this, certainly, did not imply that all was done, and that the ideological and organisational unity of the Party could be achieved automatically. A long and hard struggle lay ahead to implement the great ideas contained in Lenin's work.

First of all, *Iskra* had to work out a draft Party programme in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism and submit it for the consideration of the local Social-Democratic organisations. That the ideological unity must be "consolidated by a Party programme"³ was noted as early as October 1900 in the Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*. However, Plekhanov, who had taken on the task of compiling this draft, was in no hurry. In the meantime, letters from *Iskra*'s supporters, bewildered by the delay, kept pouring into the editorial offices. For example, in October 1901, V. P. Nogin asked insistently: "When will you finally print the programme? We have received a great number of requests for it."⁴

By late 1901, more favourable news came from Plekhanov. In January 1902, the entire editorial board of *Iskra* gathered in Munich to discuss the draft of the theoretical (or, as it was called then,

¹ *The Social-Democratic Movement in Russia*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1928, p. 97 (in Russian).

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 28.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 354.

⁴ *The Red Chronicle*, 1925, No. 4 (15), p. 229 (in Russian).

fundamental) section of the programme. But the draft so long awaited from Plekhanov proved unsatisfactory, and Lenin had more than thirty written comments to make,¹ as well as a great number of amendments proposed in the course of the discussion,² which turned into a heated debate. Particularly sharp was the controversy sparked by Lenin's proposal for substantially changing the very nature of the draft and opening it with a brief description of the economic development of Russia as the objective basis for the activity of the RSDLP and the development of the working-class movement in general.

Lenin's amendment on the socio-economic consequences of technological progress for small-scale manufacturers in a capitalist society was likewise heatedly debated. Whereas Plekhanov defined the essence of this process as a narrowing of the role they played in the economic life of society, Lenin insisted on the term "squeezing out" ("small-scale production is being ousted by large-scale production").³

Eventually, Plekhanov withdrew his draft, and those members of the editorial board who resided outside Munich departed without having reached a final decision. Still, the conference showed some positive results. Its participants came to an agreement on the practical demands which were to be included in the so-called minimum programme. Moreover, they thoroughly discussed a number of fundamental questions to be included in the theoretical part (the maximum programme), primarily, the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the political form of the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The need for a draft programme became more and more urgent; it was also dictated by the persistent attempts of the *Rabocheye Deyelo* adherents and the Bundists to convene a party congress without *Iskra's* participation. Lenin took the fundamental part of the programme upon himself. His draft, referred to as "Frey's draft" in the letters exchanged by the members of *Iskra's* editorial board, was based on Plekhanov's model, revised and stripped of its erroneous and weaker points.

Lenin returned time and again to various propositions of the draft in an attempt to set forth as clearly and as fully as possible the revolutionary Social-Democratic view on the processes of capitalist society's development, its trends and prospects.⁴ He eliminated Ple-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Preparation of the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 19-26.

² V. I. Lenin, "Material for Working out the R.S.D.L.P. Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, pp. 39-42.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Preparation of the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 20.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Material for Working out the R.S.D.L.P. Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, pp. 43-47, 49-52.

khanov's confusion of the objective, or spontaneous, with the conscious processes in the working-class movement, and introduced the classic Marxist proposition: "The emancipation of the working classes must be won by the working classes themselves"; moreover, he outlined most vividly and expressively the goal of the social upheaval to be effected by the working class: to ensure "full prosperity and free, all-round development of all of its [society's—*Auth.*] members".

By February 7, 1902, Lenin had finished the original draft of the fundamental part of the Programme and forwarded it to Plekhanov for perusal.¹ The final text was completed by March 3 to coincide with completion of the draft minimum programme, in which Lenin had taken a most active part, having written its agrarian section, the conclusion, and several passages to the section containing specific workers' demands.²

Plekhanov made no secret of his unfavourable, if not openly hostile, attitude to Lenin's draft of the theoretical part of the Programme. Early in March 1902 he completed his second draft which was even more abstract, verbose and inaccurately worded than the first, to say nothing of its numerous fundamentally erroneous propositions. These flaws, wrote Lenin in his comments on the Plekhanov draft, rendered it completely unacceptable.³ Especially numerous and emphatic were his objections to those passages, in which Plekhanov gave a *completely lopsided, incorrect appraisal* of the proletariat's relations to small manufacturers. Plekhanov did not single out the proletariat from the mass of working and exploited people as a whole. In effect, he equated the class interests of the working class and those of the small manufacturers, thereby slurring over the question of the historical mission of the proletariat objectively conditioned by capitalism and its developmental trends. Social-Democrats in Plekhanov's draft were treated not as a party representing a definite class, the proletariat, but rather as a leading force in "the emancipatory movement of the working and exploited masses".⁴

Such wordly wording was particularly inadmissible insofar as the most important task facing the foremost representatives of Social-Democracy in the period in question was to promote the shaping of the working class and its party as an independent political force.

In Lenin's view, the most serious flaw of the Plekhanov draft was that it made no reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat con-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "To G. V. Plekhanov", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 94.

² V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Preparation of the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 27-33.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-57, 58-60.

⁴ *Lenin Miscellany II*, p. 59 (in Russian).

tained in the previous draft.¹ Lenin traced this change to the fact that "...on the whole the relation of the proletariat to the 'working and exploited masses' [was] presented *incorrectly*". In Lenin's view, the recognition of the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat is "*most closely and inseparably* bound up with the thesis of the *Communist Manifesto* that the proletariat *alone* is a really revolutionary class".²

Thus, by mid-March 1902, the editorial board of *Iskra* had two versions of the draft maximum programme. Because the authors, Lenin and Plekhanov, were unable to find common ground on which to build a single programme that would satisfy the entire board, the remaining *Iskra* editors came up with the idea of combining the Lenin and the Plekhanov versions into a joint draft taking into consideration the views of both parties on all disputed questions. The "arbitration commission" set up to this end passed a decision (which Lenin dubbed as "the conciliation agreement"³) to reach a compromise between the wordings used by Lenin and Plekhanov. It took into account Lenin's demand that the analysis of capitalist development had to include Russia and list the social by-products of capitalism, namely, poverty, exploitation, humiliation, etc. The most important thing, however, was that the clause on the class struggle and social revolution was, on Lenin's insistence, worded strictly in the spirit of orthodox Marxism. The statement on the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat was restored.⁴

As the final text of the draft adopted on April 14, 1902 at the Zurich Conference testifies, Lenin's basic suggestions were accepted. Since by and large the draft programme now met his requirements, Lenin had but a few remarks to make. The most important of them dealt with the growth and development of the contradictions inherent in bourgeois society and the parallel *increase in the numbers and solidarity of the proletariat* (this in addition to the statement that "as the working and exploited masses grow more and more dissatisfied with the existing order of things ... their struggle against their exploiters is intensified").⁵

¹ As regards the seizure of political power by the proletariat, in his original draft Plekhanov noted that power would render the proletariat "master of the situation... In this sense, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the indispensable political condition for a social revolution". Plekhanov pointed out that such formulation was particularly important since it was directed against Bernstein's revisionist conceptions.

² V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Preparation of the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 59, 51.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁴ *Lenin Miscellany II*, pp. 91-92; V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Preparation of the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 67, 76.

⁵ *Lenin Miscellany II*, p. 154 (the heated debates on the Party Programme at the Second Congress of the RSDLP testified to the importance of this seemingly minor amendment).

The Zurich Conference approved the text of the draft minimum programme as well. There was little controversy, if any, on this score apart from that stemming from the difference between Lenin's and Plekhanov's assessment of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, as well as their divergent approaches to the wording of the RSDLP's demands on the agrarian question.

Lenin was the author of the well-known plan whereby the "otrezki"—lands seized from the peasants by the landowners under the 1861 reform—were to be returned to them by revolutionary means, via peasant committees. He further proposed that redemption and quitrent payments be abolished and that the peasants be fully compensated for the sums spent on such payments, etc.

Lenin had to defend his draft of the agrarian programme against Plekhanov who proposed that the "otrezki" be redeemed and not simply confiscated. Lenin wrote: "Allowing land redemption ... runs counter to the socio-revolutionary nature of the entire demand."¹

Particularly sharp polemics flared up around Lenin's article "The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy",² written by way of commentary on the agrarian section of the Draft RSDLP Programme. In it, Lenin indicated that Social-Democrats could not limit their demands on the agrarian question to the mere return of the "otrezki", that their slogan in "an era of revolutionary uprising" should be the nationalisation of land. This proposition was strongly opposed by other members of the editorial board. Plekhanov, for example, maintained that land nationalisation was an absolutely unacceptable slogan for a bourgeois-democratic revolution. He and his supporters compelled Lenin to remove the proposition on land nationalisation from his article. The draft of the agrarian section of the programme, based on the demand to return the "otrezki", was left in the form elaborated by Lenin.

The Draft RSDLP Programme worked out by the editorial board of *Iskra* and *Zarya*, was eventually published in the 21st issue of *Iskra*, dated June 1, 1902. The well nigh six months of preparations and sharp debate were now, to all intents and purposes, over. The Party, though still fragmented, was rallying its ranks around *Iskra*. It now had an important document to rely on in the struggle for ideological unity, namely, the draft Marxist Programme which was to be adopted one year later by the Second Congress of the RSDLP. This Programme stood the test of time. More than fifteen years later, Lenin wrote that it had captured "the nature of capitalism and of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Preparation of the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 77.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 107-50.

the bourgeois society which still dominates in most civilised countries and the development of which inevitably leads to the world communist revolution of the proletariat..."¹

The Draft Programme gave a clear idea of the direction and the social consequences of capitalist development, the polarisation of class forces in modern bourgeois society, the increasingly intensified exploitation of the working class and all working people. Moreover, it showed that forces were growing which were capable of bringing about radical changes in the social system and that material prerequisites were being created for replacing capitalist production relations by socialist ones.² It was documentary evidence of the creative development of Marxism; its characterisation of the specific features and main trends in the evolution of bourgeois society, its propositions on the objective aspect of social progress, were fully in keeping with the doctrine of Marx and Engels with due account taken of the new historical conditions. At the same time it demonstrated the untenability of the ideas propounded by the Russian Economists, Bernsteinists and other critics of Marxism.

The *Iskra* draft of the Party Programme formulated the main task of the proletarian revolution ("the social revolution of the proletariat will do away with the class division of society, thereby emancipating oppressed humanity") and outlined the basic goal of socialisation of production along socialist lines and the organisation of the production process on a planned basis (namely, to ensure "well-being and all-round development of all members of society"). These sections of the draft concluded with a statement on the necessity for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the "kind of political power that would enable the proletariat to suppress any resistance on the part of exploiters".³

The draft also set forth the tasks of the Social-Democrats as the advanced, politically-conscious contingent of the working class: to organise themselves into an independent political party, to guide all manifestations of the proletarian class struggle, to ascertain the irreconcilability of the opposing interests of the exploited and the exploiters, as well as the historic significance of and the essential prerequisites for the impending social revolution. The *Iskra* draft urged the Social-Democrats to work among the non-proletarian sections of the working and exploited masses, to help them understand the hopelessness of their position in capitalist society and the need for a socialist proletarian revolution in order to liberate them from the oppression by capital, and call upon those of the working

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 119.

² *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, p. 720.

³ *Ibid.*

masses who would adopt "the proletarian viewpoint" to take part in the work of its Party.¹

While noting the community of the basic goals of the international working-class movement, *Iskra's* draft Programme stressed that each national contingent of the proletariat had its own immediate goals insofar as capitalism "is not everywhere equally developed" and develops in various countries in varying socio-political situations".² For Russia, these immediate goals were determined by the fact that although capitalism "had already become the dominant mode of production" in the country, it nonetheless retained vestiges of the old, pre-capitalist order in all spheres, vestiges which hindered economic progress and all-round development of the proletariat's class struggle and depressed and oppressed the whole nation. Therefore the immediate task of Russian Social-Democracy should be "the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy and its replacement by a republic based on a democratic constitution".³

This task of the Russian working-class movement was specified and laid down in greater detail in subsequent sections of the draft Programme—those containing the practical demands put forward by Social-Democracy as the political leader of the working class.

The first of these sections set forth the basic principles to be followed by the future democratic constitution of Russia: "...concentration of all supreme state power in the hands of the legislative assembly to be made up of representatives of the people"; the proclamation of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot for all citizens of the country over twenty years of age; guaranteed basic rights of the citizens, inviolability of the person and the home, freedom of speech, the press, assembly, strikes and associations, complete equality "without distinction as to sex, religion and race"; the right to self-determination for all nations of Russia; separation of the church from the state and of the school from the church; free and compulsory general and vocational education for all children under the age of sixteen.⁴

A special section dealing with the practical demands put forward by the draft specified the steps the Russian Social-Democrats were to take "in the interests of protecting the working class from physical and moral degeneration, and also in the interests of developing its capacity to wage the liberation struggle". Particular attention was given to securing an eight-hour working day, banning overtime, and limiting night shifts to those branches of the economy "where they are absolutely necessary for technical reasons and approved by

¹ *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, p. 720.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 721.

⁴ *Ibid.*

workers' organisations". Other measures to protect the workers' rights and interests were also set forth.¹

"In order to eliminate the vestiges of serfdom, which oppress the peasants and to ensure a free development for the class struggle in the countryside", the *Iskra* Draft Programme demanded that redemption and quitrent payment as well as obligations incumbent upon the peasantry as a duty-paying estate be repealed, that collective responsibility, and for that matter all laws "restricting the peasant in the free use of his land" be abolished; that peasant committees be set up in order to return to the village communes "the lands cut away from the peasants when serfdom was abolished" and to eliminate the vestiges of feudal relations still remaining in some regions of Russia; that the courts be granted the right to reduce the inordinately high rents and "declare all oppressing transactions null and void".²

In conclusion the draft set forth the principles to be followed by the RSDLP in its relations with other oppositional and revolutionary trends and proclaimed the Party's support of those of them which were spearheaded "against the social and political order then prevailing in Russia". It decisively repudiated all manner of reformatory projects aimed at strengthening and extending "the police-bureaucratic tutelage over the working classes".³

Thus, the Social-Democratic organisations of Russia were presented with a draft party programme drawn up in the best Marxist traditions and developing these traditions to conform to the new stage in the international working-class movement with due account of the concrete conditions of tsarist Russia. The draft included a series of theoretical propositions and practical demands which were not to be found in the programmes of other Social-Democratic parties. In addition to the thesis on the dictatorship of the proletariat, it contained a detailed formulation of the tasks facing Social-Democracy vis-à-vis the working class and the non-proletarian strata of the working and exploited masses, clear-cut demands on the political structure of the country (the latter point, for example, was missing in the Erfurt Programme of the SDPG), and a special section on the agrarian question.

The *Iskra* draft organically combined the basic conclusions of Marxist theory with concrete political objectives. It drew a dividing line between the revolutionary and the opportunist trends in the Russian Social-Democratic movement and became the point of departure for developing strategical and tactical guidelines and laying foundations for a new type of workers' party. The draft equipped

¹ *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. . . Minutes*, pp. 721-22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 722.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 722-23.

the Social-Democrats with an effective weapon against the tailism of the Economists and the "revolutionary" adventurism of the Populists, now reincarnated as the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.¹ The publication of the *Iskra* draft gave leading members of the Russian revolutionary working-class movement a rich source of ideas to be used in propaganda work among the foremost workers and for agitation among the masses in general.

The RSDLP Draft Programme worked out by the editorial board of *Iskra* and *Zarya* met with a most favourable response among the majority of local Party organisations. Letters were received from *Iskra*'s agents in Russia and local committees expressing their solidarity, and containing comments and suggestions.

One such letter sent by Z. P. Krzhizhanovskaya in Samara on behalf of G. M. Krzhizhanovsky stated that "the programme had met with approval and its publication was, of course, more than timely".² The Kharkov Committee of the RSDLP wrote the *Iskra* editors as follows: "We have, of course, adopted the programme in general and shall have only a few additions to make."³ Similarly, a note from the Tver Committee published in *Iskra* said that it "subscribed to the *Iskra* Programme and regarded its presentation of contemporary developments as most faithful".⁴ On December 19, 1902, Lenin wrote to G. V. Plekhanov: "The Tomsk people have reprinted our draft programme with an introduction which is a hymn of praise to *Iskra-Zarya* and all its work."⁵

To be sure, there were also objections to the *Iskra* Draft Programme, ranging from outright rejection of a number of its propositions (the "Economists" from the Workers' Organisation of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle) to doubts as to the correctness of some of its fundamental conclusions, doubts occasionally disguised as Marxist orthodoxy (the Borba group). These critical voices, however, were drowned out by an ever increasing chorus of positive appraisals. The publication of the draft further consolidated the role of the Leninist *Iskra* as the actual ideological leader of the Russian revolutionary Marxists.

¹ The Socialist-Revolutionary Party (the SR's) was formed in late 1901-early 1902, from the merger of the few remaining Populist groups and study circles. The basic tactics followed by this petty-bourgeois party was that of individual terror, adopted, in turn, from the Narodnaya Volya movement. Adventuristic in nature, the policy of individual terror seriously impaired the development of the revolutionary working-class movement by diverting some of the foremost proletarians from organisational and educational work among the masses. The SR terror did not do any noticeable damage whatsoever to the autocracy, but rather endangered those active in the liberation movement.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 183.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁴ *Iskra*, No. 23, September 1, 1902.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "To G. V. Plekhanov", *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, p. 97.

THE CONVOCAION OF THE SECOND RSDLP CONGRESS.
THE RISE OF BOLSHEVISM

The wide recognition gained by *What Is To Be Done?* in the Party organisations and the publication of the Draft Programme of the RSDLP in fact signalled a new stage in the development of the Russian Social-Democracy, a stage characterised by the rapidly growing influence of the *Iskra* trend in the ranks of the Marxist vanguard of the Russian working-class movement. Since the spring and summer of 1902, the adoption of the *Iskra* banner by major Social-Democratic organisations had been a predominant tendency in the Russian working-class movement. In order to complete the transformation of the RSDLP into a revolutionary Marxist party, this tendency had to be given a firm organisational basis. Proceeding from this, Lenin, together with his comrades-in-arms and all the loyal supporters of *Iskra* both in Russia and abroad launched a campaign to convene a Party congress. Getting ready for the congress, as Lenin wrote to Krzhizhanovsky in Samara on May 6, 1902, "is now our *main task*".¹

The decision to convene the Second Party Congress made it even more urgent to secure a firm commitment from the local RSDLP committees, above all the St. Petersburg committee, to the *Iskra* strategy. The campaign to win over the St. Petersburg Committee became the focal point in the Party's endeavour to muster forces, in its effort to unite the local organisations on the *Iskra* ideological and organisational platform. "St. Petersburg," Lenin wrote to I. I. Radchenko in mid-July 1902, "is a place of *direct* all-Russian importance." A genuine merger between the St. Petersburg Committee and the Russian *Iskra* organisation, he considered, would "...immediately lift the whole Party out of its semi-spectral state and raise it to the stage not only of reality, but also of a power of prime importance".²

The entire development of the Russian revolutionary movement had led to this step. It had been facilitated to a considerable extent by the literary-theoretical and practical-organisational efforts of *Iskra*, which was instrumental in changing the orientation of St. Petersburg Social-Democrats, some of whom (including a few former Economists) adopted standpoints close to *Iskra*'s. This process, including the recognition of *Iskra* as the leading RSDLP organ, was considerably promoted by Radchenko, who worked in St. Petersburg and was one of *Iskra*'s most active agents in Russia and a staunch supporter of Lenin's organisational plan.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "To G. M. Krzhizhanovsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 101.

² V. I. Lenin, "Two Letters to I. I. Radchenko", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 181.

The most important consequence of these positive changes in the ideological and political orientation of the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats was the above-mentioned statement made in July by the St. Petersburg Committee. It had an enormous impact on the Russian Social-Democratic movement as a whole, and was an example to be followed by many other committees. The next step was the reorganisation of the St. Petersburg Committee in order to create a strictly conspiratorial organisation of professional revolutionaries with clearly defined party assignments for each member or groups of members of the Committee, all in the spirit of the principles laid down by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*

One Shneerson (Yeryoma), a worker on the St. Petersburg RSDLP Committee, turned to Lenin for advice on the question of reorganisation. Having explained his own viewpoint, he asked that Lenin read his letter and added that he would "be most happy to have his criticism".¹ Lenin immediately replied to this request, received on September 14, 1902. Attaching enormous importance to the questions raised therein, recognising them as an issue which all RSDLP committees would have to face, Lenin chose to give a most detailed reply. To this we owe the famous "Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks",² completed on September 24, 1902. "Lenin has written a letter to Yeryoma," Krupskaya informed V. N. Shaposhnikova in St. Petersburg, "but it turned out so long that we shall have to send it with someone."³

Lenin recommended that the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats base their Party organisation on the principles of strict conspiracy, centralised ideological and practical leadership, assigning specific tasks and responsibilities for them to each Party member. An organisation founded on these principles would be able to make "use of everything possible in 'giving everyone something to do', at the same time retaining leadership of the whole movement, not by virtue of having the power, of course, but by virtue of authority, energy, greater experience, greater versatility, and greater talent".⁴

All local Social-Democratic activities, stressed Lenin, are to be guided by a committee which "must consist of both workers and intellectuals". The practice of dividing them into two committees followed by the Economists in St. Petersburg (and in several other cities as well) must be abandoned. On this point Lenin was in full agreement with his correspondent. "We should particularly see to

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 223-30.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 231-52.

³ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 274.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 242.

it," wrote Lenin, "that as many workers as possible become fully class-conscious and professional revolutionaries and members of the committee...". It was most desirable that the committees involve "all the principal *leaders* of the working-class movement from among the workers themselves".¹

The committee should direct all aspects of the local movement, and be in charge of all local institutions, people and means of the Party. In order to cope with these responsibilities, a committee should serve as the headquarters for all affiliated institutions and branches, specifically, district groups and factory sub-committees, as well as a network of groups and circles responsible, among other things, for the transportation of illegal literature, propaganda work, and the struggle against provocations and espionage in the ranks of the working-class movement. Lenin's plan assigned an especially important role to factory organisations (circles and sub-committees). "Every factory," he wrote, "must be our fortress."²

In "A Letter to a Comrade" a great deal of attention is paid to the problem of providing Party centres with all-round information on the activity of local organisations. This was one of the most pressing problems of the Social-Democratic movement. Lenin commented as follows: "At the present time—this must be said openly—we either know nothing about the *real internal* work of a committee, except from its proclamations and general correspondence, or we know about it from friends or good acquaintances. But it is ridiculous to think that a huge Party, which is capable of leading the Russian working-class movement and which is preparing a general onslaught upon the autocracy, can limit itself to this."³

That the local committees were slow to go over to new methods of information was to a considerable extent due to the Party's insufficient knowledge of the state of affairs in its various organisations and its poor internal communication.

"A Letter to a Comrade" reached St. Petersburg, apparently, in December 1902. It met with a most favourable response. "I read Lenin's letter with delight and I agree with it on every point,"⁴ Y. D. Stasova, one of the workers of the St. Petersburg Committee who had gone over to *Iskra's* side wrote to the editorial board. "I was very happy about Lenin's reply on the questions related to organisational matters. It will, I hope, help disentangle the muddled concepts which prevailed in the former CC⁵ [Central Committee of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 237.

² *Ibid.*, p. 243.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁴ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 515.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 535.

League of Struggle.—*Auth.*],” wrote A. E. Rerich, one of the organisers of the new Committee, in a letter full of hope and concern. “Lenin’s letter produced a very favourable impression,”¹ Babushkin who had by that time settled in St. Petersburg, reported in December 1902.

“A Letter to a Comrade” was as timely as *What Is To Be Done?* had been several months previously. It satisfied the urgent needs of the participants in the movement, who realised perfectly well that the shifts in the attitude towards the Programme and *Iskra*’s over-all orientation could be secured only by refashioning the entire Party work. “As for a programme of action for the local committees,” Krupskaya wrote to an Iskrist in Russia, “it is, indeed, one of the most topical questions to-day. St. Petersburg has already sent us their project on this matter. The Moscow Committee has done likewise. The Kharkov people have also written on reorganising local work, etc.; Lenin has written the St. Petersburg comrade about how, in his view, the local work is to be carried on...”²

The *Iskra* editorial board took steps to make Lenin’s “Letter to a Comrade” widely known not only in St. Petersburg, but also in other Social-Democratic organisations. In her letter to Kharkov dated October 31, 1902, Krupskaya wrote, for instance, “If you give us an address for *glued-together mail*, we shall send you Lenin’s reply to the letter from the St. Petersburg people on local work.”³ In early December, she wrote to Nizhny Novgorod: “We are sending along—in glued-together form—a letter from a St. Petersburg comrade on local organisation and Lenin’s reply thereto. Since it is of general interest, I am sending it to you. Inform us of your opinion on the matter.”⁴ Typewritten or hectographed copies of the “Letter” were widely distributed throughout Russia. In June 1903, on the eve of the Second RSDLP Congress, the Siberian Social-Democratic League managed to have it printed.

Lenin’s letter was an important source of information on *Iskra*’s organisational ideas at a time when such information was particularly needed, namely, when the Party was preparing for its Second Congress.

The RSDLP Committee’s proclamation (following the example of the St. Petersburg Committee) of *Iskra* as the leading organ of the Russian Social-Democrats, their support—in one form or another—for the *Iskra* Draft Programme, tactical guidelines and the Leninist principles of Party organisation, were accompanied by a bitter struggle against the old, essentially opportunist notions about the content

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 389-90.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 482.

and forms of Social-Democratic activity. Still, the fact that the local committees were drawing closer to *Iskra*, even ranging themselves by its side, was becoming ever more apparent.

In August 1902, in her letter to the Orel Committee, Krupskaya wrote that "of late" the *Iskra* editorial board's contacts "have begun to broaden and consolidate, and there is every hope now that the Russian organisations will take a more active part in our work and that with their help we shall succeed in creating a really solid Russian organisation".¹ This hope grew with every month. In mid-December 1902, Krupskaya said that the *Iskra* trend "had scored an unquestionable victory". "At any rate," she wrote, "we have counted more than fifteen committees on the *Iskra* side, the remaining are half-heartedly ours; on some committees we simply have no information. Thus, the ideological unification of Russian Social-Democracy is at hand. True, it is so far only a very primitive, rough form of unification. Nonetheless, we have made a beginning; the rest will be done by the congress."²

That the local committees officially recognised *Iskra* as the central leading organ was particularly important since *Iskra* gave a new dimension to their work among the masses, and enhanced their prestige as a major factor in the political life of Russia.

1902-1903 saw an upsurge in the activity of the local RSDLP committees, as is evidenced by the broader scope of their propaganda. Thus, from September 1900 to May 1903, the Kiev Committee issued 42 leaflets in over fifty thousand copies, while the Yekaterinoslav Committee issued from three to four leaflets a month, in ten to fifteen thousand copies each.³ Among the outstanding events illustrating this period in the history of the RSDLP was the general strike in Rostov directed by the Don Committee, where staunch Iskristes were in the majority. In addition to issuing leaflets and proclamations, the Rostov Social-Democrats addressed meetings of many thousands of factory workers and representatives of the working people of the city and the neighbouring districts.⁴

The fact that *Iskra* had won an overwhelming majority of the most authoritative local committees to its side enabled it to re-establish the Organising Committee (set up in the spring of 1902 and arrested almost to a member soon after) and assume the job of preparing the Second RSDLP Congress. That the entire St. Petersburg RSDLP Committee was on *Iskra*'s side made it possible to re-establish the Organising Committee with a guaranteed majority of *Iskra*

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 129.

² *Ibid.*, p. 516.

³ *Essays on the History of the Communist Party of the Ukraine*, Kiev, 1972, p. 50 (in Russian).

⁴ *Essays on the History of the Don Party Organisations*, Part I, 1898-1920, Rostov-on-Don, 1973, pp. 77-83 (in Russian).

supporters. In early August 1902, in London, where the *Iskra* editorial board was located at the time, a conference attended by representatives of the Russian *Iskra* Organisation (Krasikov), the St. Petersburg Committee (Krasnukha) and the North-Russian Workers Union (Noskov) was held. In a letter to Radchenko, dated August 16, 1902, and revised by Lenin, Krupskaya wrote that the above-mentioned organisations were to set up "an Organising Committee to prepare the all-Party Congress. Subsequently this Committee was to include representatives from Borya¹ and from the south.... The Organising Committee takes upon itself the functions of a CC and does its best to prepare a genuine party unification."²

The declaration by the Southern Worker group, an influential Social-Democratic organisation in the south of Russia, that it was in solidarity with *Iskra* and its proposal to join in the practical work, also facilitated the formal re-establishment of the Organising Committee and helped *Iskra* supporters to gain a clear majority on it.

A new Organising Committee was elected at a conference in Pskov on 2 November, 1902. It included Krasnukha of the St. Petersburg Committee, Levin of the Southern Worker group, and Radchenko of the *Iskra* organisation in Russia. The Organising Committee coopted other members of the *Iskra* organisation in Russia at its very first meeting, among them Krasikov, Krzhizhanovsky, Lengnik and Lepeshinsky, and Stopani of the North-Russian Workers' Union. Except for Levin, they were all consistent Iskrist.

The conference adopted an Announcement which pointed to the general reasons for the setting up of the Organising Committee (such as the need for the earliest possible re-establishment of unity within the RSDLP at a time when the revolutionary working-class movement was gaining momentum; the importance of the Party's disassociating itself from the other opposition forces in Russian society—those expressing the interests of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois sections of the population), and described the goals and objectives of the Committee. The Organising Committee held, as the Announcement pointed out, that "*preparing the conditions for the convocation of a Party Congress*" was "the first and foremost task". Realising the importance of the tasks it had undertaken, the Organising Committee declared that "if it has nevertheless made so bold as to do so, that is only because the need for unity is so pressing, because disunity is making itself felt all too keenly, and because continued disorganisation constitutes so great a threat to the common cause".³

¹ *Borya*—the name for the Bund in secret correspondence.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 148; see also pp. 150, 190.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Announcement of the Formation of an Organising Committee", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 308-09.

It was also important that the activities of the Organising Committee were recognised as related to the *Iskra* line. "It was likewise decided," said the précis of the conference's resolutions, "that Olga¹ would not only actually proceed from the principles laid down by *Iskra*, but also openly admit affinity with the newspaper."²

Shortly afterwards police persecution drastically depleted the Organising Committee: Radchenko, Lepeshinsky, and then Krasnukha were arrested. The police even got their hands on the précis of the conference's resolutions that Lepeshinsky had made for the *Iskra* editors. But this time, the arrests did not stop the activities of the Committee because it was backed by *Iskra*, which by the autumn of 1902 had grown into an influential force.

Iskra immediately put its considerable prestige behind the Organising Committee. In reprinting the "Announcement of the Formation of an Organising Committee", initially issued as a leaflet, the *Iskra* editors supplied it with an afterword calling upon committees, groups, circles and individual Social-Democrats to establish "direct and active contacts with the O.C." and to give "their most active support to the great work of unification".³

The same line of support for the Organising Committee was followed by the *Iskra* organisation in Russia. "The main task now is to strengthen the Organising Committee," Lenin wrote at the end of December 1902 to the Bureau of the *Iskra* organisation in Russia, which was in Samara, "to give battle, on the basis of recognition of this O.C., to all who are opposed, and then prepare for convening the congress as soon as possible."⁴ Lenin himself took an active part in the work of the Organising Committee, helped draft its principal documents, and gave advice on how to assign functions among its members.

An important task of the Organising Committee was to work out a programme for the congress, to compile a list of problems to be discussed, and to select speakers on each of them. The Pskov conference only drew up a rough outline of the programme, while details were put off till the next meeting of the Organising Committee, when, as Lepeshinsky wrote, "reinforcements in the form of a detailed draft will have arrived"⁵ from the *Iskra* editors. Levin, who had escaped

¹ A female name used in secret correspondence to designate the Organising Committee.

² *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 433-34.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Announcement of the Formation of an Organising Committee", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 310.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "To the Bureau of the *Iskra* Organisation in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, p. 100.

⁵ *Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 434.

arrest, asked the *Iskra* editors "to send a draft of the congress agenda" so that Olga could take guidance from it in compiling its own draft.¹ Responding to his request, Lenin immediately wrote and sent a draft agenda of the forthcoming congress to Kharkov, where the O.C. Bureau was located at the time. He suggested that the congress begin by discussing the attitude to the Bund in connection with its claim to special status in the Party. ("If only a federation, then we should part at once and sit separately," Lenin wrote.) Further, he believed it expedient to raise the following questions: the programme of the Party and its central organ; principles of the Party's organisation; problems of tactics and the attitude to other parties; reports of delegates ("it is very important that there should be reports from every committee, and as full as possible"); unification of groups and organisations abroad, etc.²

It is known from the correspondence between the *Iskra* editors and the Organising Committee that this letter from Lenin did not reach the addressee and in early February 1903 the O.C. Bureau again asked the *Iskra* editors "to send a draft 'order of the day' as requested by the committees".³ The problem was very important indeed, and Lenin drafted a "Programme of the Second Regular Congress of the RSDLP",⁴ which eventually became a basis for the proceedings of the congress.

The situation in which preparations for the Second RSDLP Congress were made differed in principle from that in which *Iskra* had begun its work: the break with the opportunists was in the main completed; the Economists had lost their influence in most of the organisations; and the task of unifying the sound revolutionary forces in the Party had moved to the fore. The break with the opportunists and exposure of their bankruptcy as a trend in the Social-Democratic movement, however, did not mean that opportunism was done away with in Russia forever. The remnants of the Economist organisations, which had lost their former influence remained and tried to act, and various conceptions of the programme, tactics and organisation of the working-class movement taken from the writings of Russian and foreign followers of Bernstein also remained. Being aware of this, some of the *Iskrists* suggested that the all-Party congress be put off and only a congress of the committees consistently adhering to the *Iskra* positions be convened. Lenin, however, insisted on a congress of the entire Party, striving to draw some of those who were vacillat-

¹ Ibid., p. 498.

² V. I. Lenin, "To E. Y. Levin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, pp. 120, 121.

³ *Correspondence*, Vol. 3, pp. 71-97.

⁴ *Lenin Miscellany IV*, pp. 50-52.

ing over to *Iskra*'s side. He held that *Iskra*'s victory had to be consolidated at a congress of all Russian Social-Democrats.

This line was seen in the effective cooperation in the Organising Committee between the Iskristes and representatives of the Southern Worker group who, following the arrest of Radchenko and Krasnukha, assumed temporary control of the O.C. Bureau. At the same time, the *Iskra* editors were taking measures to strengthen the Organising Committee: after a few months abroad, one of the most energetic members of the Committee, Krasikov, returned to Russia, and other Iskristes also were attracted for work in the Committee.

There was a growing tendency for joint action among the Russian Social-Democratic organisations in the period of preparations for the Second Congress. In particular, nearly 30 committees and groups linked with *Iskra* published or distributed leaflets on a strike in Rostov in November 1902. In February 1903, 23 local committees and groups issued leaflets on the anniversary of the 1861 reform abolishing serfdom, and 14 Party committees responded with leaflets to events in Zlatoust, where in March 1903 police fired on participants in a peaceful strike with economic demands (69 workers were killed and over 250 wounded).¹

The growing tendency for joint action among the Russian Social-Democratic organisations increased the influence of the Organising Committee, which stood for unity. As early as February 1903, the right of the Organising Committee to convene the congress was recognised by 12 Social-Democratic organisations, including the St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Yekaterinoslav and Don committees, the North-Russian Workers' Union, the *Iskra* organisation in Russia, and the Southern Worker group. The Organising Committee relied on their recognition and support in completing its preparations for the congress. At its conference in February 1903, the Organising Committee endorsed the rules of the congress, on the basis of which and with due account of the recommendations of a number of committees, it finally approved the list of 21 local and six non-local committees [i.e., not limited to the boundaries of a definite locality] to be represented at the Second RSDLP Congress.

The overwhelming majority of the more prestigious organisations of Russian Social-Democracy which were given authority to form the central bodies of the Party, to adopt a Marxist Programme, to set guidelines for the work of the Party and to determine the principles of its structure, were either gravitating to *Iskra* at the time or had been pro-*Iskra* from the outset.

Social-Democratic organisations from all major cities and industrial centres of the country were represented at the Second RSDLP

¹ *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, pp. 395-401.

Congress which opened in Brussels in July 1903. The composition of the Congress reflected actually the entire spectrum of political trends in the Russian Social-Democratic movement of the early 20th century—from *Iskra*, which had gained in strength (its line was upheld by 27 delegates with 33 casting-votes) to the stagnating Economists (three delegates backed by five Bundists). In between were eight delegates representing or gravitating to the Southern Worker line (they had ten votes). Owing to the broad representation of the main organisations and trends of Russian Social-Democracy, the Congress was able to decide on the more important problems of Party organisation, and to draft the Programme and political line of the Party.

There were tested, experienced proletarian revolutionaries, such as Lenin and his followers, among the delegates; there were people who had come to espouse Marxism and the working-class movement after participation in Narodnik groups and organisations, among them Plekhanov, Knipovich and Deich; and young revolutionaries who had joined the movement after the formation of the RSDLP, including Shotman and Vilensky. Most of the delegates knew the background to the emergence and development of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia and had taken an active part in the ideological struggle following the First Congress of the Party.

The Second Congress dealt with virtually all the most important problems of the Party's activity and the development of the revolutionary working-class movement, including the programme, the principles of organisation and basic tactics. Besides, the Congress would elect the central bodies of the RSDLP.

When the programme was put up for discussion, overt and covert opportunists from among the delegates made an attempt to push through amendments to the *Iskra* draft which would have distorted its meaning. "The supporters of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, the Bundists, and diverse delegates who during the Congress were nicknamed the 'marsh' practised incredible obstruction," Lenin wrote later on. "The debate on the programme dragged out beyond all belief."¹

The assault on the *Iskra* draft was launched by the extremely lengthy speech of Martynov, delegate of *Rabocheye Dyelo*. Drawing parallels between the draft tabled at the Congress and the programmes of West European Social-Democratic parties, Martynov found differences between some of the principles of the draft and the provisions of those programmes, and tried thereby to devalue the document under consideration. He was echoed by another *Rabocheye Dyelo* delegate, Akimov, who referred not to essentially Marxist documents

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Second Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democracy Abroad", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 78.

like the Erfurt or Heimfeld programmes but rather to the incontestably opportunist programme document of the Austrian Social-Democrats adopted in 1901. Akimov frankly called for "altering the very spirit of the programme".

The key principles of the *Iskra* draft came under attack by the opportunists. In a bid to emasculate the revolutionary essence of the document, they came out in force against the dictatorship of the proletariat. Forays of this sort were intended to divert the RSDLP onto the road of revisionism, since the point on the dictatorship of the proletariat had been formulated in the programme, as Lenin pointed out later, in connection "with the struggle against Bernstein, against opportunism".¹

The drive of the overt opportunists to exclude any mention of the dictatorship of the proletariat from the programme was supported by Leon Trotsky, one of a group of vacillating Iskristis which shortly afterwards was to form the nucleus of a new opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, Menshevism. While posing as a champion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he asserted that it would be possible only when the proletariat constituted the "majority" of the nation.² This attitude betrayed a lack of understanding of the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a general disregard for the role of the many millions of peasants as an ally of the working class in revolutionary struggle.

The Congress rejected the attempts of the opportunists to emasculate the revolutionary spirit of the programme.

Martynov, supported by Akimov and by the Bundist Lieber, also attacked another passage in the draft, which related "the growth in the numerical strength and cohesion of the proletarians" to the exacerbation of the contradictions of capitalism. Trying to rehabilitate the positions of Economism, he demanded that the wording of this point be changed to mention the growth of the numerical strength, cohesion and consciousness of proletarians as an objective process. In that case, the growth of the class consciousness of the proletarians (largely explained by the dissemination of scientific knowledge and proletarian ideology among the working class) would have appeared to be a consequence of exclusively spontaneous processes.

This stand was indirectly supported by Martov, who claimed that the omission of the word "consciousness" had been accidental and that it should be restored. Martov's amendment was supported in the programme commission. However, Lenin resolutely opposed it at a plenary meeting: it creates the impression, he said, that conscious-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Contribution to the History of the Question of the Dictatorship", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 340.

² *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, p. 136.

ness grows spontaneously, "yet, there is no conscious activity of workers ... outside the Social-Democrats' sphere of influence".¹ Eventually, Lenin's wording was adopted.

Disputes erupted, too, over the national question, and also over the specific provisions concerning representation of workers of different nationalities, notably Jews and Poles. The Bund, upholding the opportunist doctrine of "national and cultural autonomy", demanded that it be recognised as the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat. The Congress resolutely opposed this, because it could split the whole Russian proletariat by nationalities. Eventually, the Bund delegates walked out of the Congress.

Polish Social-Democrats who attended the Congress as guests also walked out; being against nationalist tendencies in principle, they interpreted the demand of the Draft RSDLP Programme for the self-determination of nations as a factor that would necessarily cause the secession of the Polish lands from Russia, to which they were opposed.

The debates on the nationality question grew even more heated as a consequence of the Bundists' proposal to include a demand for the equality of languages in the programme, which was essentially at the core of all their other demands. Consistent Marxists were against this in the belief that the programme should lay emphasis on the basic decision, namely, recognition of the complete equality of nations and their right to self-determination. Those who advocated reducing the issue to equality of languages, however, unexpectedly found support among the vacillating Iskrists. As Lenin pointed out, it was over this question that the first signs of a split among the Iskrists appeared.²

As a result of acute and fierce debates, the consistently Marxist views on the nationality question won the day. This was particularly important for Russia with its multinational population. "The principle was firmly established," Krupskaya pointed out in characterising the debates on this issue at the Second Congress, "that national distinctions should not interfere with the unity of Party work and the monolithic character of the Social-Democratic movement."³

The proletariat's attitude to other sections of the working and exploited people also featured prominently in the debate of the draft programme. The *Iskra* draft proceeded from the objective stake that the non-proletarian sections of the working people had in the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 86.

² V. I. Lenin, "Second Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democracy Abroad", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 79.

³ N. K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences about Lenin*, p. 75.

socialist revolution and from the possibility and probability of joint struggle against capitalism. The opportunists also attacked this important tenet, claiming that the proletariat and the non-proletarian sections of the working people did not have, nor could have, anything in common. This viewpoint was expounded, most forcefully by Makhov (Kalafati), who belonged to the Centrist group at the Congress and eventually became a Menshevik. He said: "We have only one revolutionary class, the proletariat, and the rest are neither fish nor fowl, trailing along ... and would only like to gain some benefit."¹ This attitude may have looked "revolutionary", but could only bring about an utter defeat of the liberation movement because the peasantry constituted the majority of the population of Russia at that time.

Arguing against the opportunists, Lenin recalled Marx's view of the problem, notably his reference to the belief of the communards that the cause of the Commune was also the cause of the peasantry. "...It cannot be doubted that under certain conditions, it is by no means impossible for one section or another of the working people to come over to the side of the proletariat," Lenin stressed. "The important thing is to define these conditions correctly."²

The discussion of the agrarian section of the draft Party programme was especially vehement. The point at issue was not the wording but whether this section should be left in the programme at all. It was opposed not only by overt opportunists but also by the "centre" faction, namely, the Southern Worker representatives and their followers. The above-mentioned Makhov said that "the entire agrarian programme is redundant"; he openly admitted that he feared the action of the vast masses of the peasantry. Akimov claimed that "the congress cannot adopt an agrarian programme because the problem has not been sufficiently studied", while Yegorov [Levin], citing the example of Western Europe, came out against infatuation with the "peasant movement", asserting that the peasantry could play only a "purely spontaneous role"³ in the movement.

Speaking in the debate on the agrarian programme, Lenin expressed his profound conviction of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry which would lead them to join the working class in the struggle under the leadership of the workers' vanguard, the Social-Democratic Party, against autocracy and all forms of oppression and exploitation. "We believe," he said, "that, since the Social-Democrats have now taken up the struggle for the interests of the peasants, we shall in future be reckoning with the fact that the peas-

¹ *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, p. 248.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 489.

³ *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, pp. 230, 222, 224.

ant masses will get used to looking upon Social-Democracy as the defender of their interests."¹

Lenin was supported by many delegates. Gusev, for instance, said: "Our slogan is by no means limited to the agrarian programme. We will also take to the countryside the general part of our programme, all our democratic demands. It can be said with certainty that our slogan is very broad: no political party in Europe has yet offered the peasantry such an extensive programme outright."²

Most of the delegates took part in the debate on this and other points of the minimum programme. Many of them made constructive proposals which, in one form or another, were included in the final text. The general spirit of the provisions of the minimum programme and their correlation with the main goal of the working-class movement were formulated by G. V. Plekhanov; he observed in one of his speeches that for a Marxist party, any democratic demand should be considered from the point of view of its value to the aims of the proletarian revolution.³

Following long debates, the Second RSDLP Congress adopted a truly Marxist and consistently revolutionary programme for the proletarian party of a new type, a party that was prepared to lead the working class and the non-proletarian sections of the working people gravitating to it in a revolutionary assault on the old society. The Programme was in accord with the whole spirit of this Party, reflected its intolerance of any manifestation of revisionism and opportunism, and its readiness to go all the way without fear of the difficulties.

After adopting the Programme, the Congress turned to the question of the central organ of the Party. Lenin believed that it was important to settle the question of the central organ before others, "so as at once to give battle to all opponents on a fundamental and broad issue and to ascertain the entire picture of the Congress (alternatively: to separate on an important issue)".⁴

At the Congress itself, Lenin defended this procedure against Akimov and Levin. He said that "before settling details of organisation, the Party Rules, and the like, we must first definitely decide on the trend of Russian Social-Democracy".⁵

None of the delegates to the Congress had any doubt that *Iskra* had already become the de facto central organ of the Party. The

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 497.

² *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, pp. 221-22.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "To E. Y. Levin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 121.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 483.

Iskrists and those who supported them suggested that the fact be officially recorded, whereas the rest of the delegates strove to prevent this. The proposal of the overt opponents of *Iskra*, Akimov and Makhnovets, to revive *Rabochaya Gazeta* as the Party newspaper was supported only by the authors of the proposal. The resolution passed by the overwhelming majority noted "*Iskra's* services to ideological unification, to the cause of the development and defence of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy and to the struggle on the basis of these principles against all sorts of opportunist trends", "to leadership of practical Party work", and also "*Iskra's* leading role in the work of unification".¹ In this way *Iskra's* line was recognised as the line of the RSDLP. "...*Iskra* became the Party and the Party became *Iskra*,"² Lenin wrote.

Particularly deep differences emerged when the Congress began to discuss the principles of Party organisation. Fundamentally different approaches to this problem made themselves felt at the very first sittings.

The draft Rules worked out by Lenin provided for the organisation of the entire activity of the RSDLP as a militant, centralised and highly disciplined Party of the working class, a party ready for resolute action. Lenin attached great importance to the approval of these *Iskra*-ite organisational principles by the Congress and regarded them as an indispensable condition for building a new type of party. "Unity on questions of programme and tactics," he wrote shortly after the Congress, "is an essential but by no means a sufficient condition for Party unity, for the centralisation of Party work.

"The latter requires, in addition, unity of organisation, which ... is inconceivable without formal Rules, without the subordination of the minority to the majority and of the part to the whole."³

This viewpoint was not shared by all the delegates to the Congress, and not only by overt opportunists and representatives of the "marsh" but also by some of the Iskrists. The debate on the first paragraph of the Rules caused a division between the latter into "hard" Iskrists (Lenin's followers) and "soft" ones (Martov's supporters). Martov and his grouping were against the consistent implementation of *Iskra's* principles: in keeping with their idea of the character of a party, they advocated amorphous organisation.

The draft of this paragraph as suggested by Lenin read that membership in the RSDLP was open only to those who accepted its programme, and supported it materially and took part in the work of one of its organisations. Martov's wording required only assistance

¹ *The Second Congress of the RSDLP. ... Minutes*, p. 153.

² V. I. Lenin, "To Alexandra Kalmykova", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 161.

³ V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 387.

to the Party, and not personal participation in the work of an RSDLP organisation. Lenin's wording laid "organisational foundations for keeping the ranks of the Party pure, for its consolidation, centralisation and discipline, and for enhancing the role of the Party member", whereas Martov's opened the door wide "for petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers who vacillated both ideologically and organisationally".¹ Martov's wording was supported by the Southern Worker delegates and overt Economists and Bundists, and was carried by a majority vote. But that was the last success scored by the opponents of Lenin's idea of the proletarian revolutionary Party. The withdrawal of the Bundists and the Economists from the Congress changed the balance of forces, and the "hard" Iskristis were left with more votes than the opportunist and vacillating elements. That enabled Lenin and his supporters to win a decisive victory in the debates on the other points of the Rules and organisational problems, to translate the *Iskra* principles of organisation into practice, and to uphold the spirit of Party unity against isolationism and organisational vagueness.

By and large, the Party Rules adopted by the Second Congress conformed to the *Iskra* ideas of organisation formulated by Lenin in *What Is to Be Done?* and in *A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks*. "Only with respect to certain details," Lenin wrote, "were the Rules marred by the anti-Iskristis with the aid of a minority of the Iskristis."² Later on, the Third RSDLP Congress changed the first paragraph of the Rules and adopted Lenin's version. Put into practice, *Iskra*'s plan of organisation became the basis for creating the militant Marxist party of the Russian proletariat and for its activity and development. It was characterised by a combination of democratic and centralist elements, which eventually came to be known as democratic centralism.

The assertion of Lenin's principles of organisation at the Second Congress was backed up by the elections to the Central Committee and *Iskra*'s editorial board. Most of those elected to the central bodies of the RSDLP were "hard" *Iskra*-ites, Lenin's supporters, which could ensure the implementation of the resolutions of the Second Congress.

The clash of the two trends over the principles of organisation was summed up, as it were, by Lenin's speech in connection with Martov's refusal to work on *Iskra*'s editorial board because of, as he said, "the state of siege in the Party" and "emergency laws". Lenin said in reply: "Yes, Comrade Martov is absolutely right: the step we have

¹ M. A. Suslov, *The Second Congress of the RSDLP and Its Worldwide Historic Significance*, Moscow, 1973, p. 13 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "A Brief Outline of the Split in the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 127.

taken is undoubtedly a *major political step* showing that one of the trends now to be observed has been chosen for the future work of our Party. And I am not at all frightened by the dreadful words a 'state of siege in the Party', 'emergency laws against particular individuals and groups', etc. We not only can but we must create a 'state of siege' in relation to unstable and vacillating elements, and all our Party Rules, the whole system of centralism now endorsed by the Congress are nothing but a 'state of siege' in respect to the numerous sources of *political vagueness*. It is special laws, even if they are emergency laws, that are needed as measures against vagueness, and the step taken by the Congress has correctly indicated the political direction to be followed by having created a firm basis for *such* laws and *such* measures."¹

The election of leading bodies that would consistently implement all the decisions of the Second RSDLP Congress sealed the victory of Lenin's principles of Party unity over opportunist striving for isolationism, decentralisation and irresponsibility. The elections to the Central Committee and *Iskra's* editorial board finally divided the delegates into the majority ("hard" *Iskra*-ites, Lenin's supporters) and the minority (Martov's supporters together with the "centre" and the remnants of the anti-*Iskra*-ites). That was the beginning of the split in Russian Social-Democracy that eventually led to the formation of the truly proletarian revolutionary Bolshevik Party and the opportunist, conciliatory and essentially petty-bourgeois party of the Mensheviks.²

"The worldwide historic significance of the Congress consists in the fact that it saw the completion of the process of the unification of the revolutionary Marxist organisation and the formation of a Russian working-class Party based on the ideological, political and organisational principles elaborated by V. I. Lenin."³

In fact, the Second Congress of the RSDLP became the founding congress of the Bolshevik Party, a new type of proletarian party that was not only capable of waging a struggle for everyday needs of the working people but also of leading a decisive assault on the positions of capital.

The Party was put to its first serious test immediately after the Second Congress. The Mensheviks launched an attack on its principal decisions: first they set up a boycott of the central bodies of the Party and then took them over with the help of unstable elements who had failed to follow unswervingly to the principled positions of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 507-08.

² *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, p. 479.

³ *On the 70th Anniversary of the Second Congress of the RSDLP. Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee of April 4, 1973*, Moscow, 1973, p. 6 (in Russian).

the Second Congress. A campaign of slander and lies was launched against Lenin and his followers. The situation was aggravated by Plekhanov's betrayal. He had defended the line of revolutionary Marxism at the Second Congress but went over to the Menshevik camp shortly afterwards. As a consequence, the Mensheviks found themselves in control of the Party's central organ. The loss was all the more painful because *Iskra*'s previous work under Lenin had won it great prestige, and it took time for the advanced workers who supported the resolutions of the Second Congress, to realise that they were now dealing with a new, Menshevik *Iskra*, which had retained nothing but the title of the old, Leninist one.

Nevertheless, the ideas of Bolshevism had struck deep root in the Party thanks to the efforts of Lenin's *Iskra* during the nearly three previous years. That is why the tireless and resolute struggle of Lenin and his supporters against any revision of the decisions of the Second Congress of the RSDLP, the retreat to isolationism and parochialism and the "rehabilitation" of Economism helped overcome the crisis in the Party. Lenin's book *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*,¹ published in May 1904, played an outstanding role in the struggle against Menshevism and in affirming the principles of Party life worked out by the Second Congress. The book, based on a thorough analysis of the proceedings of the Congress, revealed the fundamental differences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

The danger of the Mensheviks' "steps back", from Party unity to isolationism and from the principles of centralism and proletarian discipline to anarchic autonomy and irresponsibility, was very grave and could disorganise the proletariat in the critical time preceding the first Russian revolution. That was why Lenin brought all the force of his genius to bear on the organisational opportunism of the Mensheviks, all the passion of a man who had devoted his life to the emancipation of the working people. "In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation,"² he wrote, convincingly demonstrating that the activities of the Mensheviks were denying the working class this weapon. Lenin's book spread quickly throughout Russia, and was welcomed by the majority of the local RSDLP committees. It helped Party members realise the gravity of the danger looming over it and the need to rally around the positions of the Second Congress of the RSDLP.

By the end of 1904, a Bureau of the Majority Committees, which actually performed the functions of the Bolshevik Central Committee till the Third Party Congress, was formed. The newspaper *Vperyod* (Forward) began to be published, reviving the best traditions

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 203-425.

² V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 415.

of Lenin's *Iskra*. The formation of Bolshevik centres signified the consolidation of the theoretical, programmatic, tactical, and organisational principles, worked out by *Iskra* and recorded in the resolutions of the Second Congress of the RSDLP, in the working-class and Social-Democratic movement of Russia.

Bolshevism, which was born in Russia, also had firm and deep international roots. Lenin stressed on many occasions that the Russian proletariat, embodying the main tendencies of the development of the liberation movement of the working masses in the new epoch, "relied at once on the *experience* of the workers of the whole world, both on their theoretical experience, on the achievements of their class-consciousness, their science and experience summed up by *Marxism* and on the practical experience of the proletarians of neighbouring countries, with their magnificent workers' press and their mass organisations".¹

The factors that made the emergence of the Bolshevik Party an event of epochal significance were, among others, that it consistently took this experience into account and scientifically analysed the new, determining trends of historical development and the state of the international working-class movement at the new stage. It saw its mission in answering questions and resolving tasks "such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world".² It was the world's first proletarian organisation able to lead the workers' struggle for social emancipation successfully in the new situation.³ It was the first proletarian party whose entire work was guided by the principles of scientific socialism, a party that had the ability to lead the working class not only in a successful struggle for partial demands, for current interests, but also in a struggle for complete economic, social, and political emancipation.

The appearance of Bolshevism as a school of social thought and as a political organisation of the proletariat introduced a radical change in the alignment of forces in the Russian and, subsequently, the international working-class movement. It was the first party to enter the arena of history with a programme that not only defined the ultimate aim of the working class—socialism—but also the practical ways and means of achieving that aim through an unremitting revolutionary struggle. This objectively made the Bolshevik Party the vanguard of the international socialist movement.

The creation of this party in Russia was facilitated by objective socio-economic, political, and ideological conditions. Moreover, the fact that the first proletarian party of a new type was formed in

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Our Tasks", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 282.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 370.

³ *Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin. A Collection of Documents and Other Materials*, Moscow, 1970, p. 39 (in Russian).

Russia was largely due to the existence of favourable subjective factors. Of these, the most important was Lenin's theoretical and practical work in the working-class movement at the close of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century: this greatly speeded the formation of a party which combined fidelity to Marx's teaching on the world-historic mission of the working class with reliance on the finest traditions of the heroic struggle of Russian revolutionaries against the tsarist autocracy. "Lenin formulated and carried out the task of forming such a party in Russia: truly revolutionary, uncompromising towards opportunism, well-organised, united, armed with revolutionary theory, and capable of directing all manifestations of the proletariat's class struggle for social emancipation."¹

¹ M. A. Suslov, *The Second Congress of the RSDLP and Its Worldwide Historic Significance*, p. 7.

Chapter Eleven

LENINISM AND THE KEY PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINETEENTH AND BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century Lenin's theoretical and political work expressed the vital needs of the international working-class movement in a form measuring up to the new historical situation, ensured the continuation and further elaboration of revolutionary Marxism, and created the conditions allowing the proletariat to fight decisive class battles. While crossing swords with bourgeois ideology and opportunism Lenin formulated and developed his ideas and principles into a coherent system that embraced and enriched all of Marxism's component parts. Founded on a profound and all-sided generalisation of the new epoch's experience, these ideas marked the commencement of a new stage in the development of Marxism.

LENIN'S CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF REVOLUTIONARY THEORY

At the very beginning of his work Lenin creatively assimilated the theoretical legacy of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels while analysing concrete historical reality and studying an extraordinarily wide spectrum of questions related to the development of capitalism in general and to the working-class movement in particular. He examined these questions in their dialectical interaction, researching the general laws of the historical process and the problems linked to the practical policy of the revolutionary proletariat, giving these problems scientifically substantiated answers that served as an effective guide for revolutionary action.

Leninism's adversaries invariably tried (as they continue to do to this day) to prove that the significance of Lenin's theoretical work in the period up to 1905 did not range beyond the limits of that period and national frontiers, thereby seeking to belittle its historical role

and present it as a purely "Russian phenomenon" and a "minor" element of the ideological and political struggle in Russia at the end of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century.¹

The striving of the high priests of anti-communism and opportunism to distort the essence of Leninism and set it apart from the teaching of Marx is directly linked with these attempts. By flagrantly misrepresenting the methodology and political views of the great theoreticians and leaders of the proletariat, the falsifiers portray Marx as a determinist, objectivist theoretician relying entirely on the natural course of events, and Lenin as a "voluntarist" practitioner and impatient subjectivist giving priority to revolutionary violence; Marxism is regarded as a science, a status denied to Leninism; the theory of Marx is represented as a doctrine applicable only to developed capitalism, while Lenin's teaching is described as a specific interpretation of Marxism suitable only in backward countries; Marx is described as a proponent and Lenin as an opponent of democracy and humanism.

Asserting that Lenin "replaced" Marxian historical determinism by "revolutionary activism", the US philosopher Zbigniew A. Jordan endeavours to prove that "Lenin's doctrine ... is incompatible with Marx's teaching".² Alfred G. Meyer, another "critic" of Leninism, argues that "Lenin conceived of the proletarian revolution as the product of great minds", thereby coming into conflict with Marx, whose theory was allegedly that the revolution "would develop spontaneously out of the inevitable breakdown of capitalism".³

These and similar specious interpretations of Leninism's essence and role spring from the class attitude of their authors as vilifiers of scientific socialism. The class interests of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologues induce them to consider historical reality and Marxism-Leninism in a distorted, false light. Their slanted interpretation of the origin and development of Leninism is brought into bold relief by an analysis of the initial period of Lenin's activity, when new revolutionary ideas and views took shape, Lenin's genius became an effective factor of the development of the proletariat's ideology and political guidelines, and the teaching of Lenin took shape as the Marxism of the new epoch.

The objective requirements of the working-class movement and the revolutionary, creative character of Marxism made it necessary to

¹ D. Geyer, *Lenin in der russischen Sozialdemokratie*, Cologne, 1962; R. Pipes, *Social Democracy and the St. Petersburg Labor Movement, 1885-1897*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967.

² Zbigniew A. Jordan, *The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism: A Philosophical and Sociological Analysis*, Macmillan, London, 1967, pp. 355, 356.

³ Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1957, pp. 51, 83.

develop that teaching constantly. In works written on the borderline between the nineteenth and the twentieth century Lenin dealt with all the general provisions underlying the revolutionary theory of Marx: the historical inevitability of capitalism's collapse under the impact of the antagonisms implicit in it; the world-historic role of the working class as the grave-digger of capitalism, and the builder of a socialist society; proletarian internationalism as the world view and political principle of the working class; the revolutionary proletariat's need to organise itself into an independent party; the establishment of an alliance of the working class with the peasants and all other working people; the assertion of the proletarian dictatorship in the process of the socialist revolution.

But Lenin did not merely uphold these provisions. He reproduced them on a new level of analysis of concrete reality, brought them into line with the conditions of the epoch of the growth of proletarian social revolution, and thereby enriched their content and reinforced their theoretical and practical significance.

Lenin's early works were a model of profound analyses of the essence of Marxism, of a creative approach to the application of Marx's propositions to studies of social phenomena. As Lenin himself stressed time and again, this approach was an indispensable condition of fidelity to the principles of Marxism.¹

Depending on the specific tasks of the ideological and political struggle waged by the revolutionary proletariat, Lenin gave his attention to the relevant aspect of Marxism, invariably proceeding from the organic link between all the aspects of that teaching and resolutely repulsing the attempts of the opportunists to fragment the Marxist teaching and replace it with a mechanical set of provisions. Lenin saw the living soul of Marxism in materialist dialectics and he enlarged upon it creatively.

Questions of dialectics became central to the philosophical problems examined in Lenin's works of the mid-1890s polemising with the spokesmen of liberal Narodism (Populism), who were distorting and vulgarising Marx's dialectical methodology. Demonstrating the total untenability of their vulgarisation of Marxist dialectics by reducing it to the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" pattern, Lenin showed the true essence of the dialectical method in sociology. He wrote: "What Marx and Engels called the dialectical method—as against the metaphysical—is nothing else than the scientific method in sociology, which consists in regarding society as a living organism in a state of constant development (and not as something mechanically concatenated and therefore permitting all sorts of arbitrary combi-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 328.

nations of separate social elements), an organism the study of which requires an objective analysis of the production relations that constitute the given social formation and an investigation of its laws of functioning and development."¹

He saw Marx's methodology as a continuously developing system of principles for a scientific assessment of objective reality, principles that amounted to a philosophical and historical generalisation of the experience of assimilating this reality on the part of people belonging to the most advanced social class, the proletariat. He mastered dialectics to perfection and successfully applied it even in his first theoretical works, in which he formulated tasks involved in society's revolutionary transformation. He made it clear that social development proceeded through the appearance and surmounting of contradictions, any analysis of which had to be based chiefly on dialectics.

He scientifically disputed the metaphysical view that society was an "extra-historical" category and proved the validity in the new epoch of Marx's tenet that the capitalist mode of production, social relations, and laws of movement were historically transient. His analysis of the dialectics of social development showed the complexity, contradictory nature, and leap-like of historical progress, which under mature capitalism is promoted in the process of class struggle, in the course of the social revolution that destroys capitalism.

Denouncing the abstract approach to problems of the revolutionary movement, Lenin wrote that "the endeavour to look for answers to concrete questions in the simple logical development of the general truth about the basic character of our revolution is a vulgarisation of Marxism and a downright mockery of dialectical Marxism".² Abstract truths of theory, he noted, were nothing more than guideline provisions, than instruments for analysing concrete data.³

Lenin deepened and specified the materialist understanding of history in line with the changes in the world situation. His socio-historical studies of this period were a major contribution to historical materialism.

He compared the subjectivist and objectivist methods in sociology, showing their epistemological kinship seen in their common "moral-ethical" approach to the study of social processes, an approach governed by idealism in explaining social development, by eclecticism

¹ Ibid., p. 165.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 32.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Once More on the Theory of Realisation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 84.

in understanding the relationship between nature and society, and by non-acceptance of the idea that historical progress is an objective law.

Lenin opposed this approach with Marxist methodology that makes no allowance for a mechanical reduction of the subjective to the objective, under which the former factor is a facsimile of the latter, or for a voluntaristic separation of conscious human activity from objective conditions. He regarded social development as a twofold process determined, on the one hand, by objective conditions—the level of the productive forces, the character of the relations of production, and the general regularities of the epoch—and, on the other, by people, by the masses, dependent on their will, on the character of the activities of the different classes, parties, and governments that influence this process in one way or another.

He wrote: "The idea of determinism which postulates that human acts are necessitated and rejects the absurd tale about free will, in no way destroys man's reason or conscience or appraisal of his actions".¹ The subjective factor can only be assessed strictly and correctly by a determinist approach, because historical necessity does not undermine the role of the individual in history, which itself consists of the actions of individuals.

Lenin counterposed the Marxist theory of the class struggle to the abstract theory of the fatality of "historical necessity" divorced from real social life, demonstrating that "historical necessity" was itself realised through the class struggle, through a collision of the interests of different classes. He wrote: "The objectivist speaks of the necessity of a given historical process; the materialist gives an exact picture of the given social-economic formation and of the antagonistic relations to which it gives rise. When demonstrating the necessity for a given series of facts, the objectivist always runs the risk of becoming an apologist for these facts: the materialist discloses the class contradictions and in so doing defines his standpoint. The objectivist speaks of insurmountable historical tendencies; the materialist speaks of the class which directs the given economic system, giving rise to such and such forms of counteraction by other classes. Thus, on the one hand, the materialist is more consistent than the objectivist, and gives profounder and fuller effect to his objectivism. He does not limit himself to speaking of the necessity of a process, but ascertains exactly what social-economic formation gives the process its content, *exactly what class* determines this necessity."²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 159.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 400-01.

In Leninism the dialectics of the objective and the subjective presumes an active attitude to reality, purposeful, intensive action by the subjective factor, which in Lenin's theory of revolution is the initiator and proponent of revolutionary changes.

As Lenin saw it, a scientific analysis of the objective conditions of social development should include a substantive and objective study of the subjects of history—the principal forces operating in society and changing the conditions of their life and themselves. He considered the question of determinism and freedom of will in its application to revolutionary practice as one of preparing the working class for revolution.

He made an exhaustive study of the attitude of the main classes of Russia to the changes taking place in the capitalist mode of production, to the objective contradictions in Russia. In this context he formulated a significant postulate of revolutionary theory, namely that "the strength of the proletariat in the process of history is immeasurably greater than its share of the total population".¹

The dialectical approach in studying social development enabled Lenin accurately to determine the alignment of class forces in Russia and the specific tasks of the proletariat's struggle long before the first Russian revolution. As early as the mid-1890s, when the workers of Russia had only entered the arena of political struggle, he foresaw that, linked to the mass working-class movement, the ideas of scientific socialism would inevitably be widely disseminated in Russia.

He enriched Marxist political economy with new propositions. Continuing the Marxist research into the evolution of capitalism, he brought to light new features of its development linked to the internationalisation and concentration of capital: capitalism was finding itself cramped within nation-states and was spreading its domination to other countries; trade links between countries were growing closer and more extensive; capital was being constantly transferred from one country to another; national banks were becoming international institutions; huge joint-stock companies were springing up with subsidiaries not in one but in several countries; international associations of capitalists were emerging. From Lenin's analysis of these developments the conclusion was drawn that internationally united capital had to be countered by the unity of the workers of all countries in a single revolutionary army.²

In *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* he elaborated the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 34.

² V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 109.

propositions of Marxist political economy on surplus value, the production and circulation of capital, and the role of capitalism in agriculture. Subsequent analyses of capitalism were given a sound foundation by Lenin's characteristic of the tendency towards the monopolisation of capital, which was manifesting itself in the "tremendous rapidity" of the concentration of production at ever larger enterprises and in the growing "power of money" concentrated "in a few gigantic institutions (banks)"¹ and forging ever closer links to large-scale social production. Lenin directed withering criticism at the Bernsteinian revision of Marx's propositions on the main trends of capitalist development. He refuted the reformist thesis that in joint-stock companies capitalism was being "democratised", stressing that these companies "actually serve to expropriate the gullible men of small means for the benefit of big capitalists and speculators".² He pointed out that the monopolisation of capital was turning protectionism from a means of safeguarding national industry into an instrument of a handful of oligarchs, who were using it for expansion on the world market, and demonstrated the hollowness of the claims that monopoly capital was preventing crises.

He took a strong stand against the attempts to vulgarise Marxism's propositions on the impoverishment of the proletariat. Capitalism, he wrote, was continuing to aggravate poverty "in the social sense, i.e., in the sense of the disparity between the increasing level of consumption by the bourgeoisie and consumption by society as a whole, and the level of the living standards of the working people". He distinguished forms of impoverishment such as the aggravation of social calamities in the "'border regions' of capitalism"—in the colonies, where capitalist expansion "frequently not only gives rise to physical poverty but to the outright starvation of the masses"; and poverty "in the political-economic sense (handicraft industries and, in general, those branches of the economy in which backward methods of production are still retained)".³

His analysis of the new phenomena in capitalism's development at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century served as the basis for his further elaboration of his teaching on imperialism and played an extremely important role in the struggle against social-reformism. In the new conditions he substantiated the revolutionary conclusion "of the mounting contradiction between

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 515, 585.

² V. I. Lenin, "Review. Karl Kautsky. Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm. Eine Antikritik", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 199.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

the increasingly socialist nature of the enterprises and the preservation of private ownership of the means of production".¹

A major contribution by Lenin was that he showed comprehensively why revolutionary theory was important for the liberation struggle of the proletariat in the conditions of imperialism. A working-class movement unarmed with advanced science, he noted, would inevitably remain weak and fragmented. In this context, he pointed to the significance of the theoretical form of struggle, stressing that Marxism saw that it was just as important as political and economic forms.²

In reply to the charge that he was exaggerating the role of the conscious element in comparison with the spontaneous, Lenin showed that any belittlement of socialist ideology, any deviation from it would strengthen bourgeois ideology. He saw the reason for this in the fact that by origin bourgeois ideology was much older than socialist ideology, that it had been more profoundly elaborated, and had immeasurably more media. "The working class," he wrote, "spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree."³ He exhorted the workers to expose hostile ideology "regardless of the fashionable and striking garb in which it may drape itself".⁴

The development of the principle of party commitment was linked organically to the struggle against bourgeois ideology and opportunism. This principle reflects the objective reality of class society. Lenin demonstrated that a single ideology common to everybody could not exist in a world divided into antagonistic classes.⁵ The approach to revolutionary theory, he insisted, should not be abstract; it had to express the interests of the working people, spring from an all-sided study of the objective laws of the social process, and show the proletariat the sure way of winning liberation.

LENIN'S TEACHING ON THE NEW TYPE OF PARTY AND THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS TEACHING

Lenin's teaching on the proletarian party of a new type was a logical outcome of social development, of the growth of the Russian and international working-class movement. The need for a party

¹ V. I. Lenin, "From the Economic Life of Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 96.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 370.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Political Agitation and 'the Class Point of View'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 337.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 384.

of that type was felt acutely by revolutionary leaders of international Social-Democracy. The experience accumulated by the world working-class movement in the closing years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century made it increasingly clear that the old forms of the proletariat's political organisation were coming into conflict with the changing social relations, with the requirements of the revolutionary and democratic movement.

Lenin rendered an historic service by resolving this great problem. He evolved an integral teaching on the party, comprehensively elaborated its theoretical and organisational foundations, its strategy and tactics, the norms of party life, and the principles of party leadership. In evolving this teaching he proceeded steadfastly from the ideas of Marx and Engels about the foundations of a political organisation of the proletariat which they regarded as the revolutionary vanguard equipped with the theory of scientific communism, a scientific programme and substantiated tactics, an organisation firmly adhering to class positions.

Lenin's substantiation of the teaching on the new type of party and the successful implementation of this teaching are among those key events in the history of the world revolutionary movement whose significance and influence grows with the passage of time. Precisely this is why the adversaries of Marxism-Leninism falsify and distort the ideological, theoretical, political, and organisational principles of this teaching.¹

A favourite gimmick of the bourgeois theoreticians is to portray Lenin's teaching on the party as a sectarian doctrine, alleging that it is closer to the Nietzschean concept of a collective superman hero or a medieval chivalric order than to the concept of a uniform political association such as a Social-Democratic party should be.² A similar gimmick is often used by the right opportunists, who argue that Lenin's teaching on the party "inevitably" leads to playing the party off against the masses, to a belittlement of the significance of activity by the working people.³

Lenin's concept of a revolutionary proletarian party is also attacked by ultra-left ideologues, who contend that "any organisation and any programme inevitably paralyses" the movement and urge the rejection of the theory of the leading party and the adoption of the concept of an "active minority" performing the role of a permanent

¹ L. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and Origins of Bolshevism*, Harvard, 1966; L. Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, New York, 1960; O. K. Flechtheim, *Bolschewismus*, Vienna-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1967.

² A. B. Ulam, *Lenin and the Bolsheviks*, London, 1966, p. 179.

³ Roger Garaudy, *L'Alternative*, Editions Robert Laffont, Paris, 1972, p. 215.

ferment and encouraging action without laying claim to leadership.¹

Assertions of this sort are evidence of a deliberate distortion of the essence of Lenin's teaching.²

Lenin defined the designation of the revolutionary party of the working class and formulated the principles underlying its organisation, spelled out its aim and tasks, and indicated the ways and means of achieving them. The party's mission is to mobilise the broadest proletarian masses and all working people for the liberation struggle.

Central to Lenin's teaching on the revolutionary party is the proposition on linking the working-class movement with revolutionary Marxism. The party, Lenin noted, would discharge its role only if it was armed with advanced theory—the Marxist teaching—and if it could creatively develop that theory in accordance with the requirements of life, of revolutionary practice. This is the ideological basis for uniting all party members, creating a consensus, achieving unity of action, establishing and developing links with the masses, and promoting the practical activity of advanced workers.

As the centre of theoretical thought and political leadership of the revolutionary working-class movement, the party is, above all, the decisive factor for understanding and implementing the possibilities being opened up for the working class by the struggle for social and democratic transformations. Lenin showed that it was illusory to hope that the working-class movement would spontaneously evolve an independent scientific ideology. By itself the working class is able to develop only a trade-unionist consciousness. Socialist consciousness is brought from without, and this is the task of the revolutionary Marxist party of the working class.

In this context it is of the utmost importance to concretise general principles, to be able correctly to apply the truth of Marxism to the specifics of each country in a given historical period. In propagating the theory of Marxism, Lenin wrote, the Social-Democrats of Russia should “help the worker to assimilate it and devise *the form of organisation most SUITABLE under our conditions for disseminating Social-Democratic ideas and welding the workers into a political force*”.³

¹ J. Sauvageot, A. Geismar, D. Cohn-Bendit, J.-P. Duteuil, *La révolte étudiante*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1968, pp. 91, 92.

² A critical analysis of anti-Marxist concepts of the genesis of Bolshevism is presented in many works, including A. F. Kostin, *Lenin's Conception of the History of the Formation of the RSDLP and Its Bourgeois Critics*, Moscow, 1973; *A Critique of Bourgeois Conceptions of the History and Policy of the CPSU*, Leningrad, 1974 (both in Russian).

³ V. I. Lenin, “What the ‘Friends of the People’ Are...”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 320.

In Lenin's teaching general revolutionary propositions and practical policy, programme guidelines and the ways and means of implementing them are closely interrelated, embodied in the shape of ideological and political unity and reinforced organisationally. Lenin saw the party as an advanced, conscious contingent, whose ideological cohesion rested on the material unity of organisation. Coherent organisation is the guarantee of its members' single will expressing the aspirations of the working class and ensuring cohesion among all working people and purposeful actions by them. For that reason Lenin insisted that "the Party, as the vanguard of the class, should be as *organised* as possible".¹

Democratic centralism became the cardinal principle of organisation of the new type of party. The foundations of this principle had been worked out by Marx and Engels. Lenin enlarged upon it with account of the experience accumulated by the working class and the changing historical conditions. He revealed the essence of democratic centralism as consisting of an organic interaction between centralism and the consistent democracy implicit in the socio-political nature of the proletarian party.

Without centralism, Lenin constantly stressed, there could be no united militant party; without it the party would inevitably disintegrate into innumerable separate, scattered organisations. He assessed negation of centralism, of party discipline as opportunism in questions of organisation, as indivisibly linked to opportunism in party tactics and programme, for to negate the need for durable organisation, centralism, and discipline was tantamount to converting the revolutionary party from the militant, leading vanguard of the workers, of all working people, into a "debating club" incapable of evolving and implementing an integral action programme.

Further, Lenin noted that centralism was organically linked to inner-party democracy, presupposing the electivity of leading organs, their accountability to the rank and file, and changes in their membership, and the right of all party members without exception to participate directly or through representatives in all its affairs. Without this the party would inevitably degenerate into a closed hierarchic organisation.

Lenin evolved the norms of party life, precise regulations governing the party's internal life and defining its forms of organisation and methods of its work. He stressed that these regulations should be adopted jointly and recorded in the relevant documents, the Party Rules in the first place. The framing of the norms of party

¹ V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 258.

life and their strict observance by all Communists and party organs without exception are a mandatory condition for the successful fulfilment by the party of its leading role. "It is our task," Lenin said, "to safeguard the firmness, consistency, and purity of our Party. We must strive to raise the calling and importance of a Party member higher, higher and still higher."¹ It was only this approach that could result in the creation of a thoroughly proletarian and ideologically united organisation capable of heading the revolutionary struggle of the working class, of the working masses against capitalism and move on to the building of a new society.

The party, Lenin said, had to assess the alignment of class forces accurately, take the interests of the entire working-class movement into account in accordance with the actual situation and specifics of each historical period and, on that basis, chart a scientific programme of action, and the ways and means of achieving immediate and end goals, ensure its own political and ideological independence, and provide the working people with effective leadership in order to transform capitalist society along revolutionary lines. To achieve these objectives the party had to have, above all, close bonds with the masses.

In accordance with Lenin's teaching the new type of proletarian party is the conscious, organised vanguard of the workers that also comprises the most advanced members of other social groups that have adopted the stand of the working class. The guideline towards enlarging the party's social base was dictated by its need to carry out its mission as leader of the liberation movement. Lenin's point of departure was that in its revolutionary struggle the working class would not be alone. "The Russian working class," he wrote, "is able to wage its economic and political struggle alone, even if no other class comes to its aid. But in the political struggle the workers do not stand alone." The peasants and all other exploited sections of the population would rise in political struggle because in a society rent by antagonisms they were denied rights. "All these groups of the population are incapable, separately, of carrying on a persistent political struggle"; they could only rise together with the "*proletariat*, which is at the head of all the propertyless".²

The leader of the revolutionary proletariat declared that he who forgot that the "Communists support every revolutionary movement"³ was no Social-Democrat. Without for a moment concealing

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 504.

² V. I. Lenin, "Our Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 210, 214.

³ K. Marx, F. Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 519.

their socialist conviction, the revolutionary Marxists should "expound and emphasise *general democratic tasks before the whole people*".¹

Lenin insisted that in driving for influence among the masses and seeking their support, the Socialists should always bear in mind that, above all, they represented the working class. "In order to be a Social-Democratic party," Lenin wrote, "we must win the *support* precisely of the *class*."²

He not only insisted that the party should adhere firmly to class positions but held that under no circumstances should the party, as the advanced contingent of the working class, be confused with the entire class. This confusion was characteristic of the opportunists. The Bolsheviks were a party of the class, Lenin pointed out, and for that reason almost the entire class (and under some conditions, the entire class) should act under the party's leadership and align itself with it. But it would be an act of complacency and tailism to believe that, under capitalism almost the entire class or the entire class could rise to the level of the consciousness and activity of its advanced contingent. It would therefore be a serious mistake and self-deceit, Lenin wrote, to "forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses gravitating towards it, to forget the vanguard's constant duty of *raising* ever wider sections to its own advanced level".³

It had always to be borne in mind that the revolutionary party of the working class was not automatically endowed with a vanguard role, that this role had to be won. Lenin wrote that "it is not enough to call ourselves the 'vanguard', the advanced contingent; we must act in such a way that *all* the other contingents recognise and are obliged to admit that we are marching in the vanguard".⁴

One of Lenin's outstanding achievements was his scientific elaboration of the principle of party leadership: unity between political and organisational work, between theory and practice, between words and deeds; combination of the continuity of the party's general line with the formulation and creative solution of questions posed by life, by practice; consolidation of the links with the masses, and an all-sided account of their interests and sentiments; collective leadership; personal responsibility of each for his sector of work. The realisation

¹ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 425.

² V. I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 263.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 426.

of these principles presupposes a high level of revolutionary initiative and activity in implementing the party's political line.

Lenin always said that the Marxist revolutionary intelligentsia had an important role to play in fulfilling leading functions in the party. Showing that it was theoretically untenable and politically disastrous to attempt to bring the working class into conflict with this intelligentsia, he emphasised that "the theory of socialism grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals".¹ On the other hand, noting the special role and responsibility of the revolutionary intelligentsia to the mass working-class movement, he wrote that "the 'ideologist' is worthy of the name only when he *precedes* the spontaneous movement, points out the road, and is able ahead of all others to solve all the theoretical, political, tactical, and organisational questions which the 'material elements' of the movement spontaneously encounter".² He wrote that it was important "to help to train working-class revolutionaries who will be on the same level *in regard to Party activity* as the revolutionaries from amongst the intellectuals".³

Lenin comprehensively substantiated the proposition that the formation of the revolutionary party of the proletariat and the growth of its socio-political role and influence among the masses were indispensable conditions for the spread of the working people's struggle for social and democratic changes and for the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. He stressed that the working class, which was rising to storm the fortresses of capitalism, had to have a political organisation differing fundamentally from the social-reformist parties. Revolutionary Marxism saw the real task of the revolutionary party of the working class not in concocting utopian plans for refashioning society, not in removing minor social lapses, not in hatching conspiracies, but in organising and leading the class struggle of the proletariat, "*the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society*".⁴

Lenin's teaching on the party and the experience of successfully implementing it in practice have become the property of the entire world revolutionary movement. This is the key condition allowing the working class to discharge its historic mission.

¹ Ibid., p. 375.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Talk with Defenders of Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 316.

³ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 470.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Our Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 210-11.

LENIN'S SUBSTANTIATION OF THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE PROLETARIAT

Lenin devoted much of his time and energy to elaborating the strategy and tactics of the proletariat in the socialist revolution. Creatively applying the principles of scientific communism and drawing upon the lessons of the international working-class movement, he defined the revolutionary vanguard's general political line and specified the ways and means of implementing that line in the proletariat's struggle for emancipation. The principles of revolutionary strategy and tactics as worked out by Lenin are one of the main component parts of Leninism.

Like other aspects of Lenin's teaching, this aspect continues to be the target of savage attacks by bourgeois and opportunist ideologues. They represent Lenin's strategy and tactics as an expression of subjective revolutionism and voluntarism, which, they claim, is implicit in Leninism. For instance, the West German historian Peter Lösche asserts that the strategy and tactics adopted by Lenin and the Bolsheviks had been anticipated by Adolphe Blanqui in his *Instruction On How to Take Up Arms*.¹ Lenin's strategy and tactics are similarly misrepresented by the American sociologist Alfred G. Meyer, who maintains that it was Lenin's aim to turn the objective conditions for the accomplishment of revolution into "a machinery (apparat) that could be used effectively as the generals of the revolution might see fit to use it".²

Lenin's actual approach to problems of revolutionary strategy and tactics had nothing in common with what the adversaries attribute to it. He pointed out that since the revolutionary process depended not only on objective conditions but also on the maturity level of the subjective factor, the activities of the proletarian party were a historical imperative. Noting that revolutionism was implicit in Marxism "wholly and unconditionally", he stressed that it had to be approached scientifically.³

Embodied in the strategy and tactics of the proletariat, revolutionary initiative rejects subjectivism, voluntarism, and project-mongering. It springs from analyses of social reality, from realistic assessments of the strength and potentials of the working class. At the close of the nineteenth century Lenin wrote: "When the army of the proletariat fights unswervingly and under the leadership of a strong

¹ Peter Lösche, *Der Bolschewismus im Urteil der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1903-1920*, Colloquim Verlag, West Berlin, 1967, p. 7.

² Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, p. 51.

³ V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 327-28.

Social-Democratic organisation for its economic and political emancipation, that army will itself indicate the methods and means of action to the generals. Then, and then only, will it be possible to decide the question of striking the final blow at the autocracy; for the solution of the problem depends on the state of the working-class movement, on its breadth, on the methods of struggle developed by the movement ... on the attitude of other social elements to the proletariat and to the autocracy, on the conditions governing home and foreign politics—in a word, it depends on a thousand and one things which cannot be guessed, and which it would be useless to try to guess in advance.”¹

This approach to working out the strategy and tactics of the working class takes for granted that the relationship and interaction between objective and subjective factors are taken into account at each given moment, requires a scientific assessment of the given level of social development, makes the fulfilment of the revolutionary party's leading role dependent on the maturity level of the working-class movement, on the level of that movement's political and organisational preparedness for struggle, and on the party's links with the masses.

Leninist strategy and tactics comprise a science resting on objective analyses of concrete historical reality, on generalisations of the revolutionary experience of the world liberation movement. On that basis it determines the long-term and immediate aims of the working class, the forms and methods of achieving these aims, the orientation and methods of leading the struggle of the working people for social and national emancipation, for democracy and socialism.

Lenin's analysis of the web of social contradictions in Russia enabled him to define the features of the imminent revolution, its motive forces, and the historic tasks confronting it. The theoretical foundations were thus laid for the political line of the revolutionary proletariat. This analysis made it possible to map out a correct approach to one of the key issues of strategy—the direction of the main thrust, which was charted in accordance with the need to abolish absolutism and was tied in not only with the class aims of the proletariat but also with the interests of all the working people of Russia.

Lenin's analysis introduced significant corrections in the Marxist assessment of the political role of various classes in the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia. Unlike the theoreticians of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 342.

Second International, who believed that the bourgeoisie would be the principal driving force of that revolution, Lenin demonstrated that the bourgeoisie of Russia was inconsistent in its struggle against feudalism and the autocracy, that it was inclined to come to terms with them and, consequently, could not be the leader of the revolution.

When Lenin analysed the alignment of class forces he closely examined the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. Although he saw that this was a large potential he noted that on account of the peasantry's social nature it could not conduct an organised political struggle and that its social aspirations were contradictory as they were determined by its status in society.

Of all the classes in Russia only the proletariat was consistently revolutionary and democratic, and it alone was the unqualified adversary of absolutism. "The hostility of all other classes, groups and strata of the population towards the autocracy is *not unqualified*; their democracy always looks back."¹

While past bourgeois-democratic revolutions were accomplished under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and were a stage of that capitalist class' ascension to power, in the new epoch there were, as Lenin's teaching showed, realistic possibilities for accomplishing that revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, that, in a situation marked by acute social conflicts between labour and capital, was capable not only of heading the struggle for society's democratic renewal but also turning it into a struggle for radical social changes.

Lenin showed that the proletariat was the most articulate champion of the interests of all working people and by virtue of its objective status had the mission of leading the struggle for emancipation. In support of this proposition Lenin wrote: "The proletarian alone can be the *vanguard fighter* for political liberty and for democratic institutions. Firstly, this is because political tyranny bears most heavily upon the proletariat.... Secondly, the proletariat alone is capable of bringing about the *complete* democratisation of the political and social system, since this would place the system in the hands of the workers."²

These propositions underlay the revolutionary tactics and strategy that ensured the enlistment of large sections of the working masses under the banner of the working class, created the conditions for the successful fulfilment of the tasks of the revolution's democratic stage, and cleared the way for the evolution of the struggle for

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 335.

² *Ibid.*, p. 336.

democracy into a struggle for the proletarian dictatorship, for remoulding society along socialist lines.¹

As early as 1894 Lenin drew up a plan for the practical activities of the Marxists of Russia, which orientated them on combining the struggle for democracy with the struggle for socialism.² He subsequently specified this orientation, writing: "The object of the practical activities of the Social-Democrats is ... to lead the class struggle of the proletariat and to organise that struggle in both its manifestations: socialist (the fight against the capitalist class aimed at destroying the class system and organising socialist society) and democratic (the fight against absolutism aimed at winning political liberty in Russia and democratising the political and social system of Russia)."³

He showed that the social revolution was a process that inevitably went through several consecutive stages of development, each of which had its own qualitative aspects and required modification of the specifics of the revolutionary proletariat's strategy and tactics. The general guideline towards linking the struggle for democracy with the struggle for socialism remained immutable throughout this process and was implemented differently at the different stages, depending on the character and scale of the revolutionary advances, on how massive the movement for emancipation was, and the extent of the working people's revolutionary activity; as progress was made in carrying out democratic tasks the struggle for socialism moved increasingly to the forefront of the struggle waged by the working class and its party; this development of the political line reflected the continuity of the revolutionary process and, at the same time, was a vital condition of that struggle.

Lenin's strategy and tactics expressed both the common features of and essential distinctions between general democratic and socialist tasks and were based on comprehension of the dialectical relationship between them. "To the Marxist," Lenin wrote, "the problem is simply to avoid either of two extremes: on the one hand, not to fall into the error of those who say that, from the standpoint of the proletariat, we are in no way concerned with any immediate and temporary non-proletarian tasks, and on the other, not to allow the proletariat's co-operation in the attainment of the immediate

¹ A. V. Ushakov, *The Party's Struggle for the Hegemony of the Proletariat in the Revolutionary-Democratic Movement in Russia (1895-1904)*, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 290, 292.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 328.

democratic tasks to dim its class-consciousness and its class distinctiveness."¹

The guideline towards the consistent fusion and interaction of the socialist and general democratic movements, with the former playing the leading, determining role, predicated the proletarian party's general political line and the forms, means, and methods of the practical implementation of that line in the course of the social revolution. This guideline struck at right-wing opportunism and "leftist" sectarianism in questions of strategy and tactics. Lenin wrote that "Marxism has mapped out the correct line, which is equally remote from exaggerating the importance of politics, from conspiracy (Blanquism, etc.), and from decrying politics or reducing it to opportunist, reformist social tinkering (anarchism, utopian and petty-bourgeois socialism, state socialism, professorial socialism, etc.)"².

In order to fulfil its mission as leader of the social revolution the proletariat had to preserve its class independence. This was the only condition under which it and its party could draw large numbers of working people into active participation in the revolutionary-democratic movement without losing the orientation on socialism.

In showing the role of the proletariat as the advanced champion of social progress, Lenin never interpreted that role as a barrier preventing other social forces and political parties from joining in the struggle for democracy and socialism. On the contrary, his strategy and tactics oriented the working class and its party on efforts to unite all revolutionary and democratic strata: "the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population*; they must dispatch units of their army *in all directions*".³

Lenin worked out the foundations of the political line directing the revolutionary forces towards an alliance of the proletariat with the peasants. This line, projected not only for the bourgeois-democratic but also for the socialist revolution, stemmed logically from Lenin's theory of the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle.

Lenin distinguished the chief feature of the agrarian problem in Russia, where the peasants were still to play a major role in the struggle against feudalism and absolutism. He took into account the fact that in Russia the social stratification of the peasantry was proceeding rapidly and with tremendous force.

An in-depth analysis of the correlation of social forces in the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Reply to Criticism of Our Draft Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 446.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 177.

³ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 422.

countryside and a close study of the interests and sentiments of the peasants enabled Lenin to establish a theoretically valid and practically effective successiveness in advancing agrarian demands, a successiveness linked to the general aims of the proletariat. Lenin recommended shaping its policy in such a way as "to facilitate for our farm labourers and semi-farm labourers the subsequent transition to socialism". He wrote that it was highly important that "the socialist party begin to 'stand up' *at once* for the small peasants, and do 'everything possible' for them, never refusing a hand in solving the urgent and complex 'alien' (non-proletarian) problems, and helping the working and exploited masses to regard the socialist party as their leader and representative".¹

A consistent class approach is also to be seen in the strategy and tactics Lenin framed for the nationalities question. He regarded this question as one of the major factors linking the struggle for democracy with the struggle for socialism, and as early as 1894 showed that rule by the exploiting classes was the principal source nourishing enmity between nationalities. From this he drew the conclusion that there was no more effective means of combating this enmity than organising and uniting the oppressed against their oppressors in each individual country and worldwide.²

He said it was necessary to unite all the democratic and national movements (which it was the mission of the proletariat to organise), give them the correct orientation, and rally them on the platform of, revolutionary Social-Democracy. It was vital, he wrote, "to gather, if one may so put it, and concentrate all these drops and streamlets of popular resentment that are brought forth to a far larger extent than we imagine by the conditions of Russian life, and that must be combined into a *single* gigantic torrent".³

He attached the utmost significance to the participation of the democratic intelligentsia in the liberation struggle.

In defining the tactics of the revolutionary proletariat, Lenin wrote in 1902: "Like any other class in modern society, the proletariat is not only advancing intellectuals from its own midst, but also accepts into its ranks supporters from the midst of all and sundry educated people."⁴ He urged workers to give progressive students every possible support in order to impart a revolutionary character to their actions against the government and thereby extend the ranks of the liberation movement. "The worker who can look on indifferently

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 136.

² V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 156.

³ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 420.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Revolutionary Adventurism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 198.

while the government sends troops against the student youth," he wrote, "is unworthy of the name of Socialist. The students came to the assistance of the workers—the workers must come to the aid of the students."¹

Social-Democratic organisations, he said, should utilise the opposition feeling of all social segments and groups, including the police and the clergy.² In *What Is to Be Done?* he pointed out that Socialists had to give the army the most serious attention, while in the draft of a resolution on work among troops written for the Second Congress of the RSDLP he set concrete aims, stressing the "importance of Social-Democratic propaganda and agitation among the troops" and recommending that every effort "should be made for the speediest strengthening and proper channelling of all the existing contacts among the officers and other ranks".³

The tactics evolved by Lenin were embodied not only in the direct contact established by the revolutionary proletariat with different social groups but also in the flexible policy of blocs and compromises with the social organisations and trends representing these groups. "Only those who are not sure of themselves," he wrote, "can fear to enter into temporary alliances even with unreliable people; not a single political party can exist without such alliances."⁴

Although Lenin criticised the reformist tactics of the liberal Narodniks (Populists), he saw the practical need for joint actions with the democratic segment of Narodism against the autocracy, the landowners, and the capitalists. While showing the need for tactical agreements with non-proletarian forces, he stipulated that the Marxist party should retain its identity and independence in fundamental questions of the ideology, politics, and organisation of the working class. "It is our direct duty," he wrote, "to concern ourselves with every liberal question, to determine our Social-Democratic attitude towards it, to help the proletariat to take an active part in its solution and to accomplish the solution in its own, proletarian way."⁵

The political army of the revolution, Lenin's theory said, was formed of members of all the social strata desiring democratic and socialist changes. Its composition was determined by the character

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Drafting of 183 Students into the Army", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 418.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 241; "On the Subject of Reports By Committees and Groups of the R.S.D.L.P. to the General Party Congress", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 297, 298.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 480.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 480.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Political Agitation and 'The Class Point of View'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 341.

and basic aims of the revolution and by the nation's level of social development. Lenin always considered that the first and indispensable prerequisite for correctly selecting the tactics of that army was to take into account the conditions under which the liberation struggle was taking place, to understand the social mechanism underlying the development of the self-awareness and political behaviour of the masses and giving rise to this or that situation in the revolutionary movement, to this or that change in the alignment of class forces. He stressed time and again that no form of struggle should be absolutised, noting that the true revolutionary should be able to employ all forms, legal and illegal, peaceful and violent, and that he should be prepared for a swift change from one form to another that was more in keeping with the changing situation.

At no time did he absolutise the role of violence in the proletariat's political struggle. Like Marx and Engels before him, he insisted that "the working class would, of course, prefer to take power *peacefully*" and only if "the bourgeoisie will not make peaceful concessions to the proletariat and at the decisive moment will resort to violence for the defence of its privileges ... no other way will be left to the proletariat for the achievement of its aim but that of revolution".¹

The proletariat's basic economic interests, he noted, could only be met by radical political changes, by a resolute struggle for power. He pointed out in 1899 that the "Russian workers have, in the mass, not only attained maturity for political struggle, but they have on many occasions demonstrated it by engaging in acts of political struggle, often even spontaneously".² This did not signify belittlement of the economic struggle, which, he wrote, should be developed to the utmost. The workers had to be united by trades. This was becoming "all the more urgently necessary, the more rapidly our employers organise in all sorts of companies and syndicates".³

Pointing out that for the social revolution there had to be not only the requisite material conditions but also the conviction of the masses that the revolution was necessary, Lenin attached special significance to forms of struggle that sharpened the working people's political consciousness. He identified the strike as one of these forms.

Further, he regarded political demonstrations as an effective factor paving the way to revolution. Demonstrations, he said, were not only an important means of educating the masses politically and

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 276.

² V. I. Lenin, "Apropos of the *Profession de Foi*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 289.

³ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 490.

building up the party's influence but also a means of training to fight the police and troops.

He made the choice and use of methods of revolutionary struggle contingent upon the situation in the country at the given moment, the level of the people's political activity, and the state of affairs in the camp of the counter-revolution. In this connection he defined the main characteristics of a revolutionary situation, calling it in those days a "political crisis". "We believe," he wrote, "that the government is truly disorganised when, and only when, the broad masses, genuinely organised by the struggle itself, plunge the government into a state of confusion; when the legitimacy of the demands of the progressive elements of the working class becomes apparent to the crowd in the street and begins to be clear even to part of the troops called out for the purpose of 'pacification'; when military action against tens of thousands of the people is preceded by wavering among the authorities, who have no way of really knowing what this military action will lead to."¹ Lenin closely analysed the two attributes of the revolutionary situation singled out in this formulation—a high level of activity by the masses and vacillations by the ruling circles—and attentively followed their changes as the situation grew increasingly acute in the country.

The stand of the proletarian revolutionaries on the question of the Russo-Japanese war was of immense significance for the development of the revolutionary proletariat's strategy and tactics. Lenin pointed out that the revolutionary workers should demand the defeat of "their fatherland" in this war, direct their efforts towards turning the national conflict into a war of classes, which, he wrote in February 1904 in the anti-war leaflet *The Russian Proletariat*, would lead "above all to the collapse of the entire government system based on popular ignorance and deprivation, on oppression and violence".²

It was not accidental that at this time Lenin made another close study of the experience of the Paris Commune, which was the first-ever government of the working class.³ He analysed the role played by the Paris workers in the national crisis in France, noting that their efforts brought about the "collapse of the corrupt regime", showed the significance of the Communards' struggle for democratic reform, and drew useful lessons for the Socialists of Russia not only from the Commune's achievements but also from its shortcomings.⁴

¹ V. I. Lenin, "New Events and Old Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 281.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Russian Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 113.

³ See V. I. Lenin, "Three Outlines for a Report on the Paris Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 117.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Three Outlines for a Report on the Paris Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, pp. 113-22.

These lessons helped Lenin to improve the tactics of the proletariat in the face of the mounting crisis in Russia and outline unerring orientations for the political behaviour of the workers in the impending revolutionary events. He pointed out that the successful development of the liberation movement with the broad participation of members of "the proletarian and semi-proletarian strata demanding the complete democratisation of the political and social system" could create the conditions for radical social changes and "threaten to undermine very important pillars of all bourgeois rule (the monarchy, the standing army, the standing bureaucracy)".¹

Reflecting the objective dialectics of the revolutionary process, the strategy and tactics evolved by Lenin were an effective guide for mass action, gave the Bolsheviks a dependable political orientation in preparing the proletariat for the imminent class battles, and armed them with a scientific knowledge of the forms and methods of revolutionary struggle.

LENINISM AND PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

The scrupulous attention that Lenin devoted to questions related to proletarian internationalism was motivated by the internal situation in a multinational country where unity of the revolutionary forces of all the peoples was an indispensable condition for the mass struggle for social and national emancipation, and by the international standing of the proletariat of Russia, whom developments had placed in the centre of the world revolutionary process. Lenin creatively applied the Marxist principle of proletarian internationalism to his elaboration of the ideology and policies of Russian Social-Democracy, mapping out the ways and means of resolving the problem of the correlation between the international and the national in the proletariat's revolutionary struggle, giving a socio-economic explanation of the rise and development of nations, working out the programmatic and practical principles of working-class policy in the nationalities question, and emphatically condemning manifestations of national-opportunism in the Social-Democratic movement.²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Zemstvo Campaign and *Iskra's* Plan", *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 501.

² The significance of Lenin's contribution to the theoretical elaboration and practical application of the principles of proletarian internationalism in this period is discussed in N. F. Sheetov, *Lenin's Development of the Ideology and Policy of Proletarian Internationalism (1894-1907)*, Moscow, 1966; T. Y. Burmistrova, *The Leninist Policy of Proletarian Internationalism in the Period the RSDLP Was Formed (1894-1903)*, Leningrad, 1962; V. I. Klepikova, *The Role Played by Lenin's "Iskra" in Developing the Ideas and Principles of Proletarian Internationalism*, Moscow, 1963 (all in Russian).

He saw proletarian internationalism not merely as an element of scientific communism. Like Marx and Engels, he believed that the identity of the condition and interests of workers of different countries indelibly affected all aspects of the revolutionary activity of the proletariat and its organisation and gave its ideology, policies, and practical struggle an internationalist quality.

His theory was itself the logical continuation and development of Marxism, emerging and taking final shape as a generalisation of the working-class movement's international experience, as an expression of the international interests of the working class and, in this sense, representing the development of proletarian internationalism.

Proletarian internationalism is one of the cardinal principles of Leninism. It is a form of a scientific world view expressing the identity of interests and aims of the workers of different nationalities; an ideology of revolutionary workers' parties aimed at uniting the working people of all countries in the struggle for democracy and socialism; the implementation of this ideology in the practical activities of the Socialists, in their efforts to ensure the international unity of workers; a determining principle of the structure of and relationships between revolutionary organisations of the working class.

In order to belittle Leninism's international significance, its enemies deny that its character is internationalist. They present it as a purely "Russian" phenomenon, as a doctrine suitable only for backward countries. The Austrian revisionist Ernst Fischer alleges that "in proceeding from the views of Marx" Lenin only "adapted the theory of revolution to the problems of tsarist Russia".¹ James E. Conner, an associate of Columbia University's Russian Institute, argues: "In order to accomplish his ends Lenin had to alter Marxism drastically. He had to transform it from a doctrine which charted the course of inevitable developments in the most advanced nations into one that set forth a strategy and a rationale for revolutionary activity in the least advanced countries."²

These are inventions. Although Leninism emerged on the social soil of Russia, it had international ideological and political sources and, as it developed, synthesised the experience not only of the Russian but also of the world working-class and also the democratic and national liberation movements. Moreover, Leninism drew its international character from the fact that it articulated the fundamental needs of the working-class movement in a country that for a number of reasons had become the focal point of the main contradic-

¹ Ernst Fischer, *Was Marx wirklich sagte*, Verlag Fritz Molden, Vienna-Munich-Zurich, 1968, p. 157.

² *Lenin on Politics and Revolution. Selected Writings*, edited and introduced by James E. Connor, Pegasus, New York, 1968, p. XXVII.

tions of the capitalist world system. That made a study of the realities in Russia of fundamental significance.

The general laws of the new epoch manifested themselves in Russia in a situation witnessing an unusually complex interaction between national-ethnic, cultural, and religious relations that had taken shape in the process of intercourse among the many nations, nationalities, and ethnic groups that were at the most diverse stages of social development—from primitive-communal and feudal in the outlying national areas to developed capitalist in the industrial ones. Leninism synthesised the particular in the development of the liberation struggle in Russia, thereby giving life to ideas which, expressing the basic features of the Russian revolution in generalised form, acquired an international dimension.

From the very beginning of his career as a revolutionary Lenin had always emphasised that "the movement of the Russian working class is, according to its character and aims, part of the international (Social-Democratic) movement of the working class of all countries".¹ He regarded the international and the national as an integral whole arising not from instance to instance or depending on a spontaneous confluence of circumstances, but as a dialectical relationship inherent in the working-class movement and expressing the relationship between the general and the particular in the development of the proletarian revolution.

The dialectics of the international and the national in the revolutionary activity of the proletariat springs, as Lenin saw it, from the objective dependencies formed by the practice of the revolutionary struggle of the workers. By acting against its own, "national" oppressors and exploiters the working class erodes the international system of exploitation and oppression with which its class antagonists are closely linked and thereby helps the working people of other countries to fight for emancipation. Lenin wrote that attainment of the immediate aim of the working-class movement of Russia—the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, which was the most powerful bulwark of European and Asian reaction—"would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat".²

The revolutionary struggle of the workers of each country is thus objectively of international significance and serves as a point of departure for the development of international proletarian solidarity, which is, however, unstable and ineffective at the unorganised level. Proletarian internationalism reveals its immense revolutionary potential and becomes a dependable and effective system of interna-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 96.

² V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 373.

tional links of the proletariat only on the level of organised—social, political, and ideological—activity of the working class headed by revolutionary Marxist parties. That was why Lenin insisted on each national contingent of the proletariat generalising and using the revolutionary experience of the working class of other countries, and constantly emphasised that it was the task of the Social-Democrats of Russia to develop among the workers a sense of identity of class interests with and of being part of the international army of the proletariat.

Lenin's study of the nationalities question and the proletarian programme drawn up by him for the settlement of that question were of tremendous importance to the theory and practice of proletarian internationalism. He showed that the social content of this question had changed significantly in the new historical situation. Whereas in the past it figured as part of the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and for the bourgeoisie its solution boiled down to the formation of nation-states, in the new epoch it developed into a factor of the revolutionary process directed against the worldwide system of social and economic oppression created by international capital. In this situation the struggle of the working class of capitalist countries for socialism and the movement of the enslaved peoples for national liberation acquired a common socio-economic basis that created the objective conditions for combining the national-colonial question with the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

In *On the Manifesto of the League of the Armenian Social-Democrats* and *The National Question in Our Programme* Lenin creatively developed the Marxist propositions on the nationalities question and formulated the following aims of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution: implementation of the right of nations to self-determination, introduction of guarantees of full national equality, consistent application of the principles of proletarian internationalism. Moreover, he substantiated the principles underlying the struggle for the fulfilment of this programme, which provided the basis for the policy of the proletariat on the nationalities question.

These aims were dictated by the striving to unite the working people of all nations, races, and languages under the leadership of the socialist party in the struggle for democracy and socialism: "It is the business of the proletariat to rally the greatest possible masses of workers of each and every nationality *more closely*, to rally them for struggle in the *broadest possible arena* for a democratic republic and for socialism."¹

Countering tsarism's policy of fomenting hostility between nationalities with the internationalist policy of unity among working

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the Manifesto of the League of the Armenian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 326.

people, Lenin wrote that the Social-Democrats supported every revolutionary movement against the tsarist system, "all oppressed nationalities, persecuted religious, downtrodden social estates, etc., in their fight for equal rights".¹

He approached the question of the right of nations to self-determination from consistently class, socialist positions. Rejecting the abstract, anti-historical thesis that self-determination should be recognised unconditionally, he pointed out that while the Social-Democrats opposed every attempt to influence national self-determination by violence or injustice from without, they were by no means obliged to support this demand in all cases. The workers' party, he stressed, had to subordinate the demand for national self-determination to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle.² The colonial policy of the "civilised" governments, he noted, was particularly criminal because it corrupted the working people with colonial plunder. He called upon the workers and peasants of Russia "to rise with all their might against those who are stirring up national hatred and diverting the attention of the working people from their real enemies".³

By unfolding the struggle against colonialism, for the liberation of oppressed peoples, the Leninists laid the foundation for fusing the national liberation and working-class movements and stimulated the interaction of the mainstreams of the world revolutionary process.

In the revolutionary struggle of the working class, Lenin noted, internationalism combines with patriotism expressing the proletarian attitude to the motherland. It fuses love of the motherland with national pride in the nations's contribution to mankind's progress, hatred of local oppressors, and the striving to liberate the people and refashion society on the basis of social justice.

As an outstanding champion of the internationalist unity of the working class, Lenin tirelessly worked to unite the workers of all countries on the basis of revolutionary Marxism and proletarian internationalism, contending that *unity* was the decisive condition for the proletariat's victory over its class enemy. In analysing the development of bourgeois society from the angle of the interests of the proletariat's class struggle, he identified the common elements of this development, elements springing from the internationalisation of the mode of production and exchange and comprising the objective basis for ending national disunity in the working-class movement. Since the class dominance of the bourgeoisie was not

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 334.

² V. I. Lenin, "The National Question in Our Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 456.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The War in China", *Collected Works* Vol. 4, p. 377.

confined to national boundaries, he wrote, internationalist unity of the proletariat was a historical imperative. "Capitalist domination is international. That is why the workers' struggle in all countries for their emancipation is only successful if the workers fight jointly against international capital."¹

Proletarian internationalism, one of the pillars of Lenin's theory, itself developed, was enriched, and found embodiment in new forms of politics. As the revolutionary movement gathered momentum and far-reaching historical changes took place, it acquired a more diversified content and form and its influence mounted.

The Leninist stage of the development of revolutionary theory spelled out the triumph of Marxism of a new epoch, of a genuinely international doctrine of the working class that was the product of a creative amplification of the theoretical legacy of Marx and Engels, the result of a generalisation of the experience of the international liberation movement and of a synthesis of the knowledge accumulated by advanced science. It covered an entire epoch in the history of social thought and revolutionary movements and was a factor of global significance that facilitated the subsequent development of the social revolution in the twentieth century and brought into bold relief the future triumphs of the international working class.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 109.

THE WORKING CLASS IN THE VANGUARD
OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE

The class struggle of the proletariat, the world revolutionary movement, underwent dramatic changes in the three decades following the Paris Commune of 1871. These were due to a number of factors, chiefly the modifications in capitalist production, the growing internationalisation of the proletariat itself and of the conditions of its struggle, the further spread of the influence of scientific socialism, and the aggravation of the contradictions between the various trends in the world working-class movement.

From the angle of the trends of capitalist society's socio-economic development this was a period when, as a result of the growth of monopolies, the transition took place from pre-monopoly to monopoly capitalism, to the stage of imperialism. Noting the milestones of this transition, Lenin wrote: "(1) 1860-70, the highest stage, the apex of development of free competition; monopoly is in the barely discernible, embryonic stage. (2) After the crisis of 1873, a lengthy period of development of cartels; but they are still the exception. They are not yet durable. They are still a transitory phenomenon. (3) The boom at the end of the nineteenth century and the crisis of 1900-03. Cartels become one of the foundations of the whole of economic life. Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism."¹

The maturing of imperialism led not to the extinguishing (as the reformists and revisionists maintained) but, on the contrary, to an exacerbation of the fundamental antagonisms of the exploiting system. Developments bore out the conclusions of scientific socialism that in capitalist society any progress "is accompanied by the 'progress' of contradictions, i.e., by their intensification and expansion".²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 202.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 187.

Imperialism's growth enhanced the influence of and opportunities for the most reactionary groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie. The political superstructure, above all the state, became a direct instrument of bourgeois dominance and was used more and more to foist the bourgeoisie's will upon the proletariat, suppress its organisations, and maintain capitalism's ceaseless striving to reduce the cost of labour.

Simultaneously, the working class was increasingly confronted with forms of the implementation of rule by the big bourgeoisie and its monopolistic elite such as social and socio-political manoeuvring. In order to curb the growing might of the proletariat, the ruling circles in the leading capitalist states often had recourse to steps designed to split the working people (setting other segments of working people against the proletariat, fanning discord in the midst of the working class, misleading its individual contingents politically and ideologically). The same purposes were served by various concessions to the workers in the sphere of social legislation, the strategy of widening the disparities in the living standards of different trades, the attempts to set up mass organisations of working people following in the wake of bourgeois parties, and the tactics of infiltrating existing organisations of the working class.

In spite of everything the proletariat built up muscle, growing numerically and exercising a steadily increasing influence in society. With the formation of a capitalist world economy the ranks of the international working class were swelling not only through the numerical growth of the proletariat in Europe and America but also through the growth of the army of wage labour in some countries of Asia and other continents. In this connection, Engels wrote in 1894: "The army of the international proletariat is growing—and the coming new age will see it victorious."¹ In 1895 he noted with justified pride that the strength of the *international proletarian army* had grown.²

Quantitative changes were accompanied by noteworthy qualitative modifications in the composition and structure of the proletariat. Important processes were taking place as a result of the rising level of the workers' organisation, militancy, and class consciousness.

The new situation influenced the development, policies, and ideology of the working-class movement and the strategy and tactics of the class struggle. Its basic distinctive feature in that period was that by intensifying the class confrontation in the economic sphere

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Grussadresse an die Sozialisten Siziliens", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 477.

² Frederick Engels, "Introduction to *The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850*", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, p. 201.

the proletariat and its organisations became more and more active politically, developing new (in particular, parliamentary) forms of activity. The general politisation of the class struggle was a new major phase in preparing the proletariat for the conquest of power.

The antagonism between the working class and the bourgeoisie became the pivot of the economic, socio-political, and ideological struggles in the capitalist countries and generally on the world scene. This was demonstrated convincingly by the Paris Commune, which made it clear that the working class had achieved a level where it could be the principal force of social development.

This was increasingly accentuated by the fact that the democratic slogans and demands of the working class and its organisations mirrored the interests not only of the proletariat but also of all other sections of the working population. With the transition to imperialism the working-class organisations influenced by Marxism moved to the forefront of the struggle against reaction that was hardening all along the line, notably against the trampling of the working people's basic democratic rights by the governing class, against militarism and other reactionary trends.

During the closing decades of the nineteenth century the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie moved into "*the foreground of social development*" as the main class contradiction throughout Europe. By the 1890s "*the struggle between these two great classes... reached an intensity still inconceivable in 1848*".¹

Socialist ideas spread inexorably. Comparing the situation in the world working-class movement in the 1840s and the 1890, Engels wrote: "At that time the many obscure evangels of the sects, with their panaceas; today the *one* generally recognised, crystal-clear theory of Marx, sharply formulating the ultimate aims of the struggle. At that time the masses, sundered and differing according to locality and nationality, linked only by the feeling of common suffering, undeveloped, helplessly tossed to and fro from enthusiasm to despair; today the *one* great international army of Socialists, marching irresistibly on and growing daily in number, organisation, discipline, insight and certainty of victory".²

As the working-class movement and Marxism further spread in breadth and depth, the general historical laws of the class struggle brought to light by scientific socialism were more and more eloquently confirmed. The elaboration of a correct understanding of the dialectics of the general and the particular, of the correlation between the international and national aims of the revolutionary movement became one of the key tasks of the conscious proletarian vanguard.

This period witnessed a significant advance in the merger of Marx-

¹ Ibid., p. 192 (Italics by the authors).

² Ibid.

ism with the mass working-class movement. This was a dependable guarantee that the proletariat would move to further successes in the fulfilment of its historic mission. Here the cardinal role was played by the theoretical and political work of the great leaders of the proletariat—Marx, Engels, and Lenin. A symbol of the continuity of Marxism was that Lenin took the baton directly from the founders of scientific socialism.

Of course, as in the preceding period, the development of the world working-class movement was not smooth but dialectically contradictory. On the one hand, the rate of development and level of the movement were different in the different countries. This unevenness was due to various circumstances, including the diversity of conditions, traditions and forms of the movement in countries that were at different levels of socio-economic development, and were distinguished each by its own historical and national features and the varying maturity of objective and subjective factors determining the effectiveness of the working-class struggle. On the other hand, the class struggle of the proletariat was also uneven in terms of time, going through declines and upswings. The common aims of the working-class movement had, by necessity, to change in accordance with the changes in the concrete economic and political situation, in accordance with "each particular *period* of the historical process".¹

Tempered by the class battles, the revolutionary vanguard of the working class sought to base its tactics on the concrete historical approach to the objective conditions of the class struggle. What distinguishes Marxism from all primitive socialist theories, as Lenin pointed out, is that it does not bind the movement to any definite form. It recognises the most diverse means of struggle by the revolutionary classes. It does not invent these means; it only generalises, organises, and injects consciousness into forms that emerge by themselves in the course of the movement. At different stages of the revolutionary movement and in different specific situations, depending on political, national, cultural, and other conditions, some forms of struggle move to the forefront and others sometimes undergo modifications. This is one of the paramount, fundamental characteristics that distinguish Marxism-Leninism from right and "left" opportunism, whose spokesmen strive to absolutise one or another form of struggle. To attempt to treat the question of the means of struggle apart from the concrete situation is to depart from Marxism.²

The extensive international experience accumulated by the work-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics. First Letter. Assessment of the Present Situation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 43.

² V. I. Lenin, "Guerrilla Warfare", *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962, p. 214.

ing class in this period raised a number of questions of the theory and practice of the class struggle that were of immense significance to the revolutionary proletarian vanguard in those years and at subsequent stages of the movement. It was of immense importance correctly to define the essence of the new epoch that was commencing, to define the character of its various social contradictions, motive class forces, and the principal aims of the international working-class movement. The fact that the proletariat had developed various forms of class struggle demanded a thorough understanding of the correlation between elements of spontaneity and consciousness in the working-class movement (in this connection, in order to cut the ground from under reformist, anarchist, and anarcho-syndicalist theories).

Historical material helps to establish the class, economic, ideological, epistemological, and other roots of opportunism in the main capitalist countries in the period of the transition to imperialism. This is of the utmost importance as a means of ascertaining the character of the struggle between revolutionary and opportunist trends in the international working-class movement, a struggle that escalated in the closing years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century, and also a means of correctly assessing the stand of the revolutionary proletariat's vanguard, the extent this stand depended on historical conditions, and how far it was universal.

The significance of this period is underscored by the fact that it witnessed the commencement of the Leninist stage in the development of Marxism. Scientific socialism has waged an unremitting ideological struggle on this score against adversaries of Leninism. Roger Garaudy, Ernst Fischer, and other present-day spokesmen of revisionism distort the historical facts in order to belittle the significance of the Leninist stage in the development of Marxist theory. They allege that at the turn of the century Lenin took the stance of so-called vulgar Marxism and began working on problems of dialectics only many years later.¹ These fabrications are convincingly refuted by the works of Lenin himself and by the studies of Marxist scholars,² including the materials presented in this volume.

Lenin and the Leninists set examples of struggle against national-opportunist disregard of the general laws of the working-class movement (this was what had earlier distinguished, for example, the ideologues of "Austro-Marxism" and, at a later stage, the proponents of "modernising" Marxism) and against doctrinaire-dogmatic ina-

¹ Roger Garaudy, *Lénine*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1968, p. 11.

² *The Theoretical Legacy of V. I. Lenin and Modern Philosophy*, edited by M. T. Yovchuk and others, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian).

bility to take specific conditions into account. Leninism insists on a comprehensive and sober assessment of the processes actually taking place and facilitating the spread of scientific socialism in various countries (or blocking the growth of its influence) and orients proletarian revolutionaries on scientific analyses and a correct understanding of categories such as the "centre of gravity" of the international revolutionary working-class movement interpreted as a special responsibility for the destiny of that movement, as a question of the shift of that centre to this or that country during different historical periods of the international class struggle.¹

Research into and generalisation of the history of the international proletariat's struggles at the turn of the century teach revolutionaries of successive generations to follow in the traditions of Marx, Engels, and Lenin in order to be able to draw conclusions from the diverse experience of the world working-class movement, from the lessons of all the revolutionary actions of the working class (not only victories but also setbacks). In this context it would be useful to recall Lenin's analysis of the lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871 and, later, of the experience of the three revolutions in Russia in the twentieth century. It is of especial importance today to study the problems related to the international significance of the formation of the new type of proletarian party and to make a scientific, critical analysis of the various schools of political thought that falsify Lenin's theory on the party.

A comprehensive study of the content and outcome of this stage of the history of the international working-class movement shows that in addition to the general historical laws underlying the antagonism between labour and capital throughout the world in modern times, account must be taken of the clearly outlined specific character of the features and forms of the struggle in which these laws manifested themselves in the given epoch, in each concrete period of history. Moreover, the revolutionary proletarian movement must take into account the specific way in which universal trends of the class struggle operate in a definite group of countries, the place and role of the working people of these countries at a given stage of the world revolutionary movement.

As the Marxists-Leninists see it, the character of each epoch does not reduce but, on the contrary, further emphasises the significance of the continuity of experience, of the lessons and traditions assimilated by the world proletariat as it forges ahead. This continuity was what Lenin had in mind when, writing of the international sig-

¹ Frederick Engels, "On the History of the Communist League", Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 176; Marx/Engels, "Brief an den Ausschuss der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei", Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 17, S. 270.

nificance of, for instance, the Paris Commune he stressed that it had taught the proletariat to be specific when it set tasks of the socialist revolution and that the Bolsheviks were standing "on the shoulders of the Commune".¹

Of course, a sharp political and ideological struggle rages over the assessment of the international experience gained by the working-class movement in this period.

Social-reformist historiography is a leading protagonist in these struggles. Its foundations were laid at the turn of the century by Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Eduard Bernstein, Emile Vandervelde, Thomas Kirkup and others,² and subsequently developed in writings of Karl Kautsky, Paul Louis, G.D.H. Cole, Julius Braunthal, and other social-reformists.³ There were several stages in its development. The literature that appeared at the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century reflected the views of various schools of social-reformism—the Centrists who claimed to have their own interpretation of Marxism and endeavoured to link Marxism up with various bourgeois doctrines, and the right wing who repudiated Marxism and adopted bourgeois ideology. Some books written by social-reformists about the international working-class movement of the early twentieth century, for instance, by the Webbs, Cole, Louis, and others, contain a host of facts on many, chiefly specific, problems. Subsequently, mostly after the First World War, the right-reformist current prevailed and its hostility for the revolutionary wing of the working-class movement, notably for the Bolsheviks and Leninism, assumed extreme, frequently pathological, forms. As a result, the scientific value of these works decreased perceptibly.

By and large, social-reformist historiography contains fundamental failings that make it incapable of giving a true picture of the international working-class movement of those years. First and foremost, the social-reformists have no consistent class approach to studying and interpreting the events of that period. They usually combine a positive attitude to the striving of the working people to better their condition with condemnation of their resolute actions against oppressors; this is most clearly seen in their assessment of mass revolutionary actions. As a result, in some cases this lack of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Plan of a Lecture on the Commune", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962, p. 208.

² Sydney Webb, "True and False Socialism", *Sotsializm v Anglii*, Petrograd, 1918; Beatrice and Sydney Webb, *The Consumers Cooperative Movement*, Edinburgh, 1921; Thomas Kirkup, *A History of Socialism*, London, 1906; Emile Vandervelde, *Neutrale und sozialistische Genossenschaften*, Stuttgart, 1914.

³ G.D.H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vol. III, *The Second International 1889-1914*, Parts 1 and 2, London, 1956; Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Bd. 1, Hannover, 1961; Karl Kautsky, *Die Internationale*, Wien, 1920; Paul Louis, *Cent cinquante ans de pensée socialiste*, Paris, 1953.

clear-cut class positions leads to political bias hostile to the basic interests of the proletariat.¹

An overriding feature of social-reformist historiography of the international working-class movement is its eclecticism. Almost all historians of this school use Marxist conceptions and terms. However, their main methodological approach is borrowed from bourgeois scholars. Eclecticism, ruling out consistent methodology, negates the objective laws governing the working-class movement and the scientific division of its history into periods, and misrepresents cause-and-effect links, the correlation of objective and subjective factors, and so forth. This gives wide scope for subjectivism, rules out continuity of presentation, and breeds bias and schematicism. Social-reformist historiography has also the tendency to retrospectively divorce the development of the mass working-class movement from the development of socialist thought, to consider them separately, without taking the objectively existing link into account and thereby distorting the history of both the mass movement of the working people and of socialist thought.²

For all diversity of views concerning individual aspects of the international working-class movement, several propositions are, as a rule, common for social-reformist historians.

First of all, they see imperialism not as a stage of capitalist development but—in the spirit of the Kautskian tradition—as a policy favoured by finance capital, as a “political phenomenon”. In cases where new phenomena in the economics and politics of those years are linked to the working-class movement, they are considered mainly from the viewpoint of extending the range of cooperation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie³ in order to substantiate the historical “justification” of the so-called challenge to Marxism by Eduard Bernstein, whom the right Social-Democratic leaders usually call the “father and founder of democratic socialism”.⁴

¹ *The Encyclopedia of the Labor Movement*, Vols. 1-3, Detroit, 1971; [C. A. Landauer, *European Socialism. A History of Ideas and Movements*, Vol. 1, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959; *Die Sozialdemokratie. Geschichtssabriss und Standortbestimmung*, Hamburg, 1972.

² Typical in this respect are: G.D.H. Cole, op. cit.; A. Gran, *The Socialist Tradition from Moses to Lenin*, New York—London—Toronto, 1946; H. Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party*, London, 1961; S. Miller, *Das Problem der Freiheit im Sozialismus. Freiheit, Staat und Revolution in der Programmatik der Sozialdemokratie von Lassalle bis zum Revisionismusstreit*, Frankfurt am Main, 1964.

³ G. Arfe, *Storia del socialismo italiano (1892-1926)*, Torino, 1965.

⁴ P. Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism. Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx*, New York, 1952; *Vorwärts*, January 1, 1974; H. Wachenheim, *Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, 1844-1914*, Köln-Opladen, 1967; *Histoires des doctrines sociales du Parti Ouvrier Belge au Parti Socialiste Belge*, Bruxelles, 1974, pp. 30-31.

The "proof" offered by the false theory that no objective conditions existed for the socialist revolution on a global scale and in individual countries (including Russia) rests on disregard of the aggravation of the basic social antagonisms in bourgeois society in the era of imperialism.

Further, present-day social-reformist historiography interprets the "peaceful period" in the history of the international working-class movement as one in which the class struggle "faded", and sees the period of the early twentieth century, despite the dramatic changes in the objective conditions for the development of the working-class movement, especially the inflammation of the social and political atmosphere in the leading capitalist states, merely as a continuation of the "peaceful period". In individual cases the growth of monopoly capitalism is depicted as direct implementation of the principles of socialism, and the national liberation movement is regarded as almost an obstacle to progress.

In addition, the significance and successes of the social-reformist trend are exaggerated and portrayed as the "trunk road" of the international working-class movement. Either revisionism and the various hues of fellow-travelling social-reformism, mentioned above, are extolled¹ or the danger of revisionism is belittled and centrism lauded. Both these trends are unfoundedly likened to Marxism.² The social-reformist trends in the workers' parties of the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century and also in the Second International are proclaimed as having been in harmony with the objective conditions of those years, with the interests of the proletariat. Contrary to the facts, all the achievements of the labour organisations of those years are attributed to the opportunists and not to the class struggle of the working people.³

Social-reformist historians belittle the influence of the revolutionary stream in the international working-class movement of the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century in order to disparage that stream. Most of them argue that the revolutionary

¹ H. W. Laidler, *History of Socialist Thought*, New York, 1927; D. Ligou, *Histoire du socialisme en France (1871-1961)*, Paris, 1962; F. Manzotti, *Il socialismo riformista in Italia*, Firenze, 1965; J. Price, *The International Labour Movement*, London—New York—Toronto, 1945; H. Schmidt, *Kritischer Rationalismus und Sozialdemokratie (Vorwort)*, Berlin—Bonn—Bad-Godesberg, 1975; L. Valiani, *Il Partito socialista italiano dal 1900 al 1918*, Milano, 1965.

² Julius Braunthal, op. cit.; A. C. A. Compere-Morel, *Grand dictionnaire socialiste*, Paris, 1924; P. Louis, op. cit.

³ J. Deutschvorn, F. Heine, *The International*, Hannover, 1966; H. Laidler, *History of Socialism*, New York, 1968; N. Mackenzie, *Socialism. A Short History*, London, 1966; O. Pollan, *Das A-B-C der Internationale*, Wien, 1928; W. Theimer, *Von Bebel zu Ollenhauer*, München, 1957.

Social-Democrats had no social roots or support among the masses.¹

They cast aspersions on the Marxist revolutionaries in the working-class movement of many countries. But their main assault is directed at Leninism and the Bolsheviks. Bolshevism is said to have been an anomaly, a side effect of the international working-class movement, an outcome of the specific conditions that obtained in Russia, typical only for individual, "backward", countries.² The striving to belittle the impact of Leninism on the international working-class movement³ and the historic significance of the emergence and development of the new type of revolutionary workers' party is also to be observed in the tendency to obscure the acuteness and profundity of the divergences in the Second International at the turn of the century, to conceal the class substance of these divergences.⁴

It is also characteristic that social-reformist historiography belittles the importance of the general laws of the class struggle and exaggerates the specific character of the working-class movement of individual countries.⁵ This exaggeration is usually used to justify opportunism, especially nationalistic tendencies, and leads to a depreciation and sometimes denial of the proletariat's community of aims and tasks, of international unity. The International is sometimes regarded as a simple sum of national workers' organisations, while the role of the workers' international links and interaction is underestimated.

Many of the above features are also implicit in avowedly bourgeois interpretations and assessments of the history of the working-class movement of the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Both reactionary and liberal bourgeois historiography of the international working-class movement is far from being objective and on the whole has little scientific value. In the final analysis, its efforts in this sphere pursue the aim of finding weaknesses in proletarian organisations and the entire working-class movement in order to map out the most effective ways of fighting them.

¹ J. Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too*, Westport, 1970; P. van der Esch, *La deuxième Internationale, 1889-1923*, Paris, 1957; H. Pelling, op. cit.; J. Weinstein, *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1902-1925*, New York-London, 1967; H.-J. Steinberg, *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie. Zur Ideologie der Partei vor dem I. Weltkrieg*, Hannover, 1967.

² G. D. H. Cole, op. cit.; Julius Braunthal, op. cit.; C. Landauer, op. cit.

³ J. Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Bd. II, Hannover, 1971; R. Schlesinger, "Lenin as a Member of the International Socialist Bureau", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. XVI, 1965, No. 4, pp. 448-458.

⁴ G. D. H. Cole, op. cit.; P. van der Esch, op. cit.

⁵ *International. A Documentary History*, New York, 1970; H. W. Laidler, *History of Socialism*; B. G. de Montgomery, *British and Continental Labour Policy*, London, 1923.

This is not to say, of course, that the works of some bourgeois historians do not offer useful information and some critical conclusions. For instance, Werner Sombart noted the nationalistic tendencies in the Social-Democratic movement of Germany and Austria,¹ and R. Brunhuber wrote of the contradiction between the programmes of various parties and the sentiment of their electors.² There are works with interesting facts about the international links of the proletariat.³

Despite the diversity of schools, bourgeois historiography has several common features. As a rule, bourgeois historians consider the working-class movement and the activities of the proletarian organisations of the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century in isolation from the socio-economic situation and the struggle of the working masses of that period. They show even less understanding of the objective conditions and the aims of the working class than the social-reformists. None of them, as even the most comprehensive works show, has been able to get to the bottom of the complex struggle between trends.

Most regard the working-class movement either as "apolitical", demanding nothing more than an improvement of the condition of the working people,⁴ or as an "unwitting instrument of the triumph of liberalism",⁵ in other words, of the bourgeoisie; or as a democratic movement alien to socialist ideas.⁶ The contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are belittled, while the mass actions of the working people are assessed negatively. Sympathy is usually shown for bourgeois-reformist or social-reformist organisations. The ideological and political struggle in the working-class movement is sometimes oversimplified by equating the centrists to the revolutionary Social-Democrats, and the revolutionary Social-Democrats to the anarcho-syndicalists.⁷

Many of the conclusions drawn by bourgeois historiography about the working-class movement of that period are widely used in present-day mass anti-communist literature.

A slanted interpretation of the history of the international working-class movement is also given in works reflecting the world-

¹ Werner Sombart, *The Working Men's International*, St. Petersburg, 1906 (Russian translation).

² R. Brunhuber, *Die heutige Sozialdemokratie*, Jena, 1906.

³ L. Lorwin, *The International Labour Movement. History, Policies, Outlook*, New York, 1953.

⁴ P. Taft, *The American Federation of Labor in the Time of Gompers*, New York, 1970; H. Grob, *Workers and Utopia. A Study of the Ideological Conflict in the American Labor Movement*, Evanston, 1961.

⁵ B. Croce, *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915*, Bari, 1943; G. Spadolini, *Il mondo di Giolitti*, Firenze, 1969.

⁶ E. Thompson, *The Making of the British Working Class*, London, 1963.

⁷ H. Rothfels, *Marxismus und auswärtige Politik*, München—Berlin, 1922.

view of petty-bourgeois "ultra-revolutionary" trends--from the New Left to the Trotskyists, neo-anarchists, and others. In these works the class interests of the proletariat are in most cases identified with the interests of the author's own sect or kindred social groups, and scientific objectivity and historicism are patently sacrificed for falsely understood "political expediency".

This period of the history of the international working-class movement is painted by proponents of this school entirely in black colours. The emergence of mass proletarian parties is regarded as a process of dampening and decline to the level of "economic" organisations of the proletariat. The gains of individual national contingents of the working class in the economic and social struggle are characterised as a factor weakening the revolutionary potential of the proletarian masses. Accordingly, a negative evaluation is given of the activities of trade unions and cooperatives. The experience of socialist deputies in parliaments is swept aside. The activities of the Second International are described as having been opportunist and reformist from the outset, and the International itself is likened to the organisation that replaced it after the First World War.

The cardinal problems of the working-class movement of this period also include those linked to the struggle between different currents, chiefly between the revolutionary and opportunist trends, in mass national and international proletarian organisations. For all their outward distinctions the exponents of "left" opportunism and the right revisionists are drawn together by their fallacious, unscientific interpretation of problems concerning the socio-economic reasons, ideological content, and political results and consequences of the struggle between different trends in the working-class movement. Works penned by anarcho-syndicalists and Trotskyists invariably misrepresent the fundamental character of the differences in the international proletarian movement and belittle the significance of the objective laws of the class struggle. They insist on exaggerating the importance of personal sympathies and antipathies and unsuccessfully question the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist methodological proposition that it is imperative to take as the "basis, not individuals or groups, but a *class* analysis of the content of social *trends* and an ideological and political examination of their essential and main principles".¹

This class approach accentuates the hopelessness of all the efforts of the ideologues of anarchism and Trotskyism to discredit their adversaries, the proponents of creative Marxism-Leninism, resorting to any means, including the tagging of labels. The most typical in this respect are the attempts of some "theoreticians" to interpret

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Under a False Flag", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 154.

key issues of the history of the international working-class movement and the very concepts "revisionism", "social-imperialism", and so forth non-historically, in isolation from the realities of the class struggle, and to use these false interpretations to attack true Marxists-Leninists.

Spokesmen of "left" opportunism (beginning from G. Sorel and other ideologues of anarcho-syndicalism¹ of the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century to some "neo-Marxists" of the Frankfurt school and also Jean Paul Sartre, Paul M. Sweezy, Andrée Gorz, and other spokesmen of petty-bourgeois radicalism²) misinterpret the tendencies in and outlook for the development of the world proletariat. Among other things, they distort the Marxist-Leninist propositions on the social roots of reformism in the international working-class movement under the conditions of imperialism, giving a vulgar-mechanistic view of the problem of the workers' aristocracy. A closer examination shows that their "ultra-revolutionary" interpretation of the changes in the structure of the working class since the beginning of the twentieth century and in the socio-economic condition of its various sections is in many ways a repetition of the myth of the "embourgeoisment" of the entire proletariat and of the growth of a so-called new middle class. These myths were peddled as early as the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century by Sombart, Struve, and other Katheder-Socialists.

In their untiring efforts to unite the proletariat on a principled, class basis, Marx, Engels and Lenin waged a struggle on two fronts: against opportunism on the right and on the "left". In their slanted, metaphysical approach to this problem, the "left" opportunists ignored the dialectical link between both aspects of this struggle. By artificially contrasting it to the positive efforts by the revolutionary proletarian vanguard to strengthen the positions of the working class they moved towards emasculating the living soul of Marxism-Leninism.

Little wonder that "left"-opportunist, Trotskyist, and similar interpretations of many problems of the working-class movement of this period are often used also by rabid bourgeois anti-communists.³

Marxist-Leninist historiography counters distorted interpretations of the history of the international working-class movement

¹ G. Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence*, Paris, 1906.

² Jean Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Paris, 1960; Paul M. Sweezy, "Marx and the Proletariat", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 19, No. 7, December 1967, pp. 25-42; Andrée Gorz, *Strategie ouvrière et neocapitalisme*, Paris, 1964; Andrée Gorz, *Le socialisme difficile*, Paris, 1967.

³ G. Nollau, *Die Internationale. Wurzeln und Erscheinungsformen des proletarischen Internationalismus*, Köln, 1959.

with genuinely scientific, comprehensive studies. Constantly drawing upon the theoretical legacy of the founders of scientific communism, Marxist scholars have made noteworthy advances in researching the laws governing the developments and struggles of the working class.

Considerable progress has been achieved in the 1960s and the 1970s in the study of the history of the world working-class movement, in particular of the period under review. Exhaustive research has been conducted into subjects such as the international repercussions of the appearance of Leninism and Lenin's international activities at the turn of the century, and the historic significance of the formation and development of the Bolshevik party.¹ The work of revolutionary Social-Democrats in a number of countries has been studied and objectively characterised. The work of the Second International and many workers' parties, as well as of the mass proletarian organisations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have been assessed. There are comprehensive studies of the various stages of the rise and evolution of opportunist trends, and of the relationship and struggle between revolutionary and opportunist trends in the international working-class movement of those years.²

¹ The many works on these subjects include: *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1964; V. I. Lenin, *A Biography*, Moscow, 1970; G. M. Zobnina, "Lenin's Struggle Against International Opportunism at the Close of the 19th Century", *Papers of the Academy of Social Sciences, CC CPSU*, Issue 45, Moscow, 1958; *Lenin and the International Working-Class Movement*, Moscow, 1969; *Lenin in the Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, Moscow, 1970; G. M. Mikhalev, "Formation of the Proletarian Party of a New Type in Russia and Its Impact on the Development of the World Working-Class Movement", *Papers of the Oryol Pedagogical Institute*, Vol. 25, 1964, pp. 7-306; M. S. Volin, "International Significance of the Bolshevik Party's First Programme", *Problems of History*, 1961, No. 11; S. L. Agayev, "The Second Congress of the RSDLP and the Significance of the Experience of Lenin's Party to the World Revolutionary Movement", *Working Class and the Modern World*, 1973, No. 4 (all in Russian); A. Reisberg, *Lenin: Bediehungen dur deutschen Arbeitsbewegung*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1970; A. Rothstein, *Lenin and the Socialist Movement in Great Britain*, Moscow, 1970 (Russian translation); R. A. Yermolayeva, A. Y. Manusevitch, *Lenin and the Polish Working-Class Movement*, Moscow, 1971 (in Russian); L. Reti, *Lenin es a magyar munkaszorgalom*, Kosuth Publishers, Budapest, 1970.

² I. A. Belyavskaya, *Bourgeois Reformism in the USA, 1900-1914*, Moscow, 1968 (in Russian); C. Willard, *Socialisme et communisme français*, Paris, Colin, 1978; William Z. Foster, *History of the Three Internationals*, International Publishers, New York, 1955; L. I. Zubok, *Essays on the History of the Labour Movement in the USA, 1865-1918*, Moscow, 1962 (in Russian); N. Y. Ovcharenko, *German Social-Democracy at the Turn of the Century*, Moscow, 1975 (in Russian); *A History of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, Moscow, 1971 (in Russian); *A History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, Moscow, 1962 (in Russian); *A History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970 (in Russian); *A History of the Communist Party*

On the basis of research into concrete historical material Marxist-Leninist historiography has drawn conclusions of ideological and political significance for the contemporary working-class movement as well. With the Marxist-Leninist theory of the leading, decisive role of the working class in the world's revolutionary transformation convincingly confirmed, it has been demonstrated irrefutably that the responsibility for the split in the international working-class movement devolves entirely on the opportunists, who raised obstacles to prevent the working class from carrying out its historic mission, betrayed revolutionary Marxism and the basic interests of the working class, and then overtly defected to imperialism. The workers' parties and other proletarian organisations owe their principal achievements to the revolutionary trend that gave a Marxist interpretation of social processes, indicated the correct ways and means of resolving new problems facing the working class, and developed the means and forms of class struggle conforming to the new situation.

Marxist-Leninist historiography has also proved the untenability of the claims of social-reformist ideologues to the legacy of the international proletarian organisations of the past. The right-wing Socialists can only claim the role of advocates of the opportunist trend in the working-class movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The Marxist-Leninist parties, the international communist movement, are the true heirs of the main—revolutionary—trend. As the Programme of the Communist International pointed out, the First International laid the ideological foundations of the international proletarian struggle for socialism. In its best days the Second International prepared the ground for the massive spread of the working-class movement. The Third, Communist International continued the work of the First International and, acting on the lessons of the Second International, cut off opportunism, social-chauvinism, and bourgeois misrepresentations of socialism and resolutely steered towards the realisation of the political power of the proletariat.

of Spain, Moscow, 1961 (in Russian); *A History of the Second International*, Vols. I-II, Moscow, 1965-1966 (in Russian); L. E. Kertman, *The Labour Movement in England and the Struggle of Two Trends in the Labour Party*, Perm, 1957 (in Russian); J. S. Yazhborovskaya, *Ideological Development of the Polish Revolutionary Working-Class Movement (End of the 19th-First Quarter of the 20th Century)*, Moscow, 1973 (in Russian); Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vols. II-III, International Publishers, New York, 1963-64; *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. I-II, Berlin, 1966; E. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, London, 1967; G. Procacci, *La Lotta di classe in Italia inizio del secolo XX*, Roma, 1970; C. Reeve, *The Life and Times of Daniel de Leon*, New York, 1972; E. Santarelli, *La revisione del marxismo in Italia*, Milano, 1964.

* * *

Qualitatively new phenomena in world social development came into sharp focus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Capitalism had entered its highest, last stage of development, imperialism. Drawing upon the in-depth analysis of the capitalist mode of production in the works of Marx and Engels, Lenin laid bare new tendencies in the development of capitalism, showing that there was a sharp exacerbation of all the contradictions of capitalist society as a result of the transition to imperialism and that the bourgeoisie was unable to resolve these contradictions.

The new situation required a new political orientation of the working class and its party, an answer to the questions posed by life and the practice of the revolutionary working-class movement, questions which earlier had not and could not have arisen. It was particularly important to continue the creative development of Marxist theory. This task was accomplished by Lenin. He was a true successor to Marx and Engels, he completely exposed the theoretical untenability and political harm of the theories of Bernstein and his supporters, the Russian Economists, and set an example of developing the revolutionary teaching in keeping with the new historical situation.

Guided by the dialectical method and drawing upon the works of Marx and Engels and upon the experience of the Russian and world working-class movement, he elaborated all the component parts of Marxism, evolved a coherent theory on the party, and formulated its theoretical and organisational principles, strategy and tactics, norms of life, and principles of leadership.

What, as Lenin saw it, was the new type of proletarian party like? By its class nature, ideology, aims, and tasks it had to be a party of the proletariat, which is, by virtue of its objective condition, the most revolutionary and organised class with the mission of digging the grave of capitalism and building the new, communist society. It had therefore to be a party of *social revolution*, without which the abolition of capitalist system and the transition to socialism cannot be accomplished. It had to be the *leading and guiding* force of the working class, of all working people in the revolutionary transformation of the world.

The party can fulfil its role only if it is armed with advanced theory, the theory of Marxism. Lenin wrote: "We stand firmly on the soil of the theory of Karl Marx: it was the first to turn socialism from a utopia into a science", and charted the course for its further development. He defined the aim of the revolutionary proletarian party: this was neither to devise utopian plans for the restructuring of society nor to contrive conspiracies, "*but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim*

*of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society."*¹

In the struggle of the working class of each country, of its conscious vanguard, there are, in addition to national specifics, common features that are important for the entire world revolutionary proletariat, for the anti-imperialist movement. This was noted at the 25th Congress of the CPSU, which underscored the importance of works giving a "scientific generalisation of the world historic experience of the CPSU and the experience gained by the international communist and working-class movements".² Revolutionary theory, Lenin wrote, "grows out of the sum total of the revolutionary experience and the revolutionary thinking of all countries in the world".³ Recalling these words at the Berlin (1976) Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties, Leonid Brezhnev pointed to the importance of combining the efforts of Communists in generalising revolutionary experience, the experience "of defending the vital interests of the masses, of mobilising revolutionary forces, of the struggle for socialism in countries with different levels of development".⁴

The formation of the workers' party of a new type in Russia was the most significant achievement of the period of the international working-class movement discussed in this volume. At the turn of the century, at a turning point in world socio-historical development, Lenin saw the party as the link that would play a decisive role in all the subsequent developments of the twentieth century.

The formation, strengthening, and development of the party of a new type laid the beginning for a reorganisation of the international working-class movement to meet the requirements of a new epoch, that of socialist revolutions.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Our Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 211.

² *Documents and Resolutions. XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, p. 232.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Voice of an Honest French Socialist", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 354.

⁴ *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe. On the Results of the Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe*, Berlin, 1976, p. 24.

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